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SPEECHES AND ADDRESSES
OF
SIR JOHN ANDERSON



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SIR JOHN ANDERSON



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SPEECHES AND ADDRESSES

OF

SIR JOHN ANDERSON

P.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., M.P.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL

1932—1937

FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

EDITED BY

B. ROY, B.L.



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THE RIGHT HON. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
PRIME MINISTER
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INTRODUCTION

IN April 1932, when Sir John Anderson assumed the Governorship of Bengal, the Province was passing through a critical period in its history. Terrorism was rampant, and the resources of the Government were fully taxed to maintain law and order. The world-wide economic slump had had a disastrous effect on the price of all agricultural products, especially jute, the principal source of wealth. The resulting restriction of credit meant severe hardships for the agriculturist and a general falling off of trade and prosperity for the middle and upper classes. Unemployment amongst the latter had become an issue of grave and urgent anxiety. The resources of the Province were handicapped by the provisions of the Meston Award of 1921, which diverted the proceeds of the Jute Export duty to the Central Government. In order to balance its budget the Government was compelled to resort to unpopular measures of retrenchment. The water-hyacinth pest had thrown much arable land out of cultivation, and the failure of crops, due to scarcity of water, made the livelihood of rural communities precarious. The system of education left much to be desired. Yet University education, in spite of its obvious defects, continued to have an irresistible attraction for an ever-increasing number of students. Failing, however, to provide them with employment, it left them the disillusioned victims of influences which sought

3 to exploit them for political ends only, and which sapped discipline as much in the home as in the schools and colleges. Taking advantage of the apparent dislocation of law and order, all kinds of subversive political and economic ideas reared their heads. Public life was paralyzed, and the opinions of the peaceful and loyal sections of the population either failed to find expression or passed unheard in the general outcry. The outlook seemed hopeless, and it was rightly felt that the problems lying immediately ahead called for leadership of the highest quality.

4 Sir John Anderson came to the province in India where measures must be not merely practical, but make an appeal to human sentiment. It did not take him very long to understand the situation in all its aspects. His task was not only to restore the prestige of the administration but also to ease the prevailing tension by giving the people a new outlook and fresh hope. As he studied the intricacies of the situation he might well have despaired of achieving anything in his five years of office. A master of the art of administration, he set Bengal once again on the path towards prosperity and progress.

5 His untiring efforts to co-ordinate the work both of officials and non-officials in every department of provincial life, infused fresh spirit into an administration lacking leadership. His bold initiation of new policies turned men's minds to the problems of the present and the future, and away from the disappointments of the past. Not only was terrorism brought under control, it was attacked at the root, with the result that all those formerly interned in detention camps, as well as a majority of the political convicts, are now at liberty. Trained by the same Government which they had worked



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hard to overthrow, many of them now pursue peaceful and profitable trades. Through Sir John's efforts the Meston Award was superseded, and Bengal's claim to a share of the Jute Export Duty was successfully asserted. Vigorous propaganda all over the province secured a voluntary restriction of the jute crop and adjusted supply to demand. With the rise in the price of jute there came a general increase in prosperity and a slackening of unemployment. Before Sir John Anderson left Bengal, the Calcutta University had inaugurated an Employment Bureau to find careers for its numerous alumni, the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act had brought relief to heavily indebted agriculturists, an attack had been made on the problem of the water-hyacinth, and the development of irrigation had been advanced. 6

Meantime the Round Table Conferences, and the discussions ensuing thereon, were shaping definite proposals for setting up autonomous Provinces as partners in a Federal India. When it was understood that Sir John Anderson's term of office had been extended, and he would thus be able to inaugurate Provincial Autonomy in Bengal, the news was universally welcomed. The reason is not far to seek. Every problem which faced Bengal in 1932 had, by 1937, been solved or pushed forward towards a solution. Law and order had been re-established, the prestige of the administration had been restored, and the finances of Bengal had been put on a sound footing. In consequence, it was possible for the Provincial Constitution as laid down in the Government of India Act 1935, to be inaugurated in Bengal without any ignominious limitation. The spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm which greeted Sir John Anderson on the occasion of his public departure in November 1937, will long be remembered 7



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as the most significant mark of popular approval and esteem.

8 The speeches in this book were made by Sir John Anderson on various occasions during his Governorship, and will give the reader a just appreciation of the qualities of character to which his high achievement is due. Straightforward and at times blunt, they reveal the inward calmness of a truly scientific and philosophical outlook on men and things.

9 It is a privilege to offer to the public these selected speeches in the conviction that they are of more than transitory value. It is believed that readers, wherever they may be, will enjoy and appreciate this presentation of the inner thoughts of one, who, after serving as Governor of Bengal, now bears very great responsibilities in the British Cabinet.

My grateful thanks are due to the Right Hon'ble Sir John Anderson for permission to edit his speeches and publish them in book form.

CALCUTTA,
AUGUST, 1939.

BHABATOSH ROY
EDITOR, THE HINDU.

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POLITICS



I

CONCEPTION OF POWER¹

THE choice of the subject on which I propose to address you this evening requires some comment. Before being concerned with the art of Government I was for some time a student of science. The preoccupations of later years have left me no leisure to pursue those earlier studies in detail, but perhaps, as a result, I have been led into speculations that would not have occurred to me had I myself developed on other lines.

I propose to suggest a few reflections which attempt to bring the conclusions of the biologist into relation with the conclusions—still inchoate—of the student of the social and political organisation of mankind.

Necessarily, with the very limited leisure at my disposal, I must confine my attempt to suggesting fields of enquiry rather than putting forward conclusions. And should any proposition that I seem to suggest appear untenable, let me take refuge in the quotation that “a false theory that can be compared with facts may be more useful at a given stage of development than a true one which is beyond the comprehension of the time.”²

Power is a concept common to biological, philoso-

¹ Presidential Address to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. (Estd. 1784 by Sir William Jones.) Calcutta, 15th Feb. 1937.

² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Edn. Vol. 20, p. 116.



physical and political studies. In the biological sphere, power is a characteristic of every living thing that is capable of influencing some other thing. In some form or other it is an essential concomitant of life, and in the sphere of philosophy, the study of power is the essence of the subject. What is the nature of this thing that, impinging from outside upon the bodies and minds of men, can change their form and their development? What is its source, how does it behave, how should men comport themselves towards it? The study of politics is concerned with the basis, the nature, the obligations and the purposes of authority, which is but another name for power in the hands of the body politic.

But my theme is the attitude of men towards power rather than power itself,—what have men conceived its nature to be? Is there traceable in those various conceptions any development comparable to the development in the physical organism that is known to the biologist as evolution?

If there is any such development, is it progressive—does it point to an ultimate conclusion—can we compare the attitude towards power or authority of different men at different times and say that this or that attitude is an index of a higher development in the social organism than some other attitude? If so, can we trace anything like an ordered evolution in the social and political development of mankind, and can we forecast its direction?

I do not presume to answer these questions, but if I should in this brief address provoke thought or stimulate research by others equipped by leisure and talents for the task, I shall make no apology for having failed to contribute a more technical thesis to the records of this Society.

The history of man may be described in one aspect as an endeavour first to adjust himself to his environment and later, to control that environment itself. By his success in adjustment—by a process of submission to the apparently inevitable—he has survived. By the development of reason he has been emboldened to believe that not content with submission to environment he may aspire to control the forces and conditions that surround him, and through them to control his own evolution. Comparably, perhaps, with this change in outlook, the attitude of man towards natural forces and social authority has also changed.

Let us cull a few specimens. Browning, in his poem "Caliban upon Setebos," gives us a picture of a primitive man's conception of power—an imaginative picture perhaps, but not for that reason necessarily at variance with inferences drawn from scientific enquiry.

Caliban the half-man, lying at his ease on a fine afternoon, speculates on Setebos his god—invests him with his own characteristics—finds him powerful and capricious—why not?—is capricious himself for that matter. Somewhere above Setebos, he thinks, there may be something remote and incomprehensible that he can only call "The Quiet"—but that is no concern of his,—Setebos is the one that matters to him. And when suddenly a fierce tropical storm breaks in upon his meditations, Caliban curses himself for daring to speculate upon his god, and grovels in terror and penance before the wrath of Setebos.

We thought, perhaps we had travelled a long way from that conception of power, but it only needed the capricious insecurity of a world war to bring it back. A modern American novelist¹ writing shortly after the War,

¹ *A Farewell to Arms*. Ernest Hemingway, Ch. XLI.



compares the race of mankind to a swarm of ants trying to escape from a log burning on his camp fire. "I remember thinking at the time," he writes, "that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a Messiah and lift the log off the fire.....But I did not do anything but throw a tin-cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whisky in.....I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants." The old conception of power is there, though the grovelling and the terror has yielded place to grim endurance, except for that we are back at the beginning of the circle. But perhaps this conception of the nature of power is not the whole truth.)

From Caliban to magic—to spells, and to the *mantra*¹ in its primitive conceptions, seems but a natural process. Man is still weak in the physical forces he can bring to bear on nature, weak also except in the strength of his own arm in the forces he can bring to bear on his fellow men. But he has begun to perceive a sequence in things, and if one thing can follow another or be caused by another, why should he not hit on the means of causing things far beyond the limit of his own strength?

Power itself becomes an abstract conception. An interesting illustration of this conception is quoted in a book by Dr. G. Van der Leeuw² from an account of the Melanesians, written in 1899 by Codrington, an English missionary. "He drew attention to a remarkable conception of that people which he found indicated as *Mana*. He describes it as a force, not physical, but also not spiritual in one sense—in a certain sense it is "supernatural."

¹ Vedic hymn recited by the Brahmins to invoke the blessings of God.

² *Introduction to the History of Religion*. Van der Leeuw, Haarlem, 1924.



It makes a thing—a man—an animal—into what they are". I cannot help thinking of the Platonic "Idea" as an interesting gloss—but to return to *Mana*. "If anything is great or very powerful, or dangerous, then the presence of much *Mana* is indicated. The whole of the Melanesian religion consists in the obtaining of this *Mana* for oneself, or in contriving that it works for one's own good." That last observation could be applied to much political theory and practice to-day,—but let me continue. "This force may best be compared to an electric current. Something may be charged with it, and then its force develops into a beneficent or dangerous direction. One can do much with it, but one has also to be very careful with it." I am tempted to compare an ancient and very true Chinese proverb which says—"Don't ride on a tiger—you can't dismount at will." In other words, "Don't catch a wolf by the ears."

To master and employ this mysterious quality, instead of dreading and evading it, is the beginning of magic. It is also the beginning¹ of conscious human development. To understand it, and to know the ends for which it should be used, is the purpose of philosophy, politics and morality.

Magic is power only so long as it works. But in so far as the performer can induce others to believe that it will work, magic still retains its potency over the human mind. ("The universe is under the power of gods—the gods are under the power of *mantrams*, the *mantrams* are under the power of the *Brahmins* therefore the *Brahmins* are our gods."²) This is a quotation that may sound strange to modern political thinkers, but is it so far removed from the ideas of those who in the political sphere pin

¹ Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology. Vol. II, pp. 35-36.

² Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 3, p. 441.



their faith to doctrines not founded upon experiment but formulated *a priori* for acceptance as a creed? Looking at large portions of the world to-day, can it be denied that magic spells, long discredited by experiment in the sphere of the natural sciences, still retain their potency in the sphere of political theory? But I am digressing.

While men were still attempting to discover the secret of control over the forces of nature, others, perhaps stronger of arm, perhaps with a more limited and more practical vision, had demonstrated the power that can be attained by organising and controlling their fellow men. We do not know when first the tribe arose from the family to become a nation, or when first a nation became an empire, but of this we can be fairly sure, that the process was one of discipline and organisation—of the growth of law—not by any means what we might regard as just laws—but of well recognised laws made by men for their own purposes. We see man building up within an incomprehensible universe a comprehensible microcosm—an environment which he could control. Power takes on a new aspect—it becomes a force consciously wielded and directed to definite ends—futile ends perhaps, because they may not have been the ultimate ends towards which the social organism must move or be moved if it is to survive.

At the close of the eighteenth century Tshaka,¹ the head of a small tribe of Zulus, set out to master his neighbours by organising his tribesmen into regiments, after an example originally derived from the Europeans. He carried the organisation of his fellow men to the point of forbidding, under pain of death, any intercourse between the sexes except under licence—a licence granted only as a

¹ Tshaka, the great Zulu Despot. James Stuart. *United Empire*, 1924 (Vol. XV, new series.)



CONCEPTION OF POWER

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reward to the bravest and most successful of his regiments. The coward or the regiment that failed in battle was ruthlessly wiped out. In the eighteen years or so of his rule, we are told, he directly or indirectly caused the death of about two million souls, and revolutionized the lives of the population within a radius of 500 to 1,000 miles from his capital. His social system lasted till the Zulu War of 1879. It produced, we are told, "that innocence and general attractiveness that we habitually associate with naive intelligence, strong physique and an exacting foe." But its basis was in fear and its justification was success in war, and with failure in war and removal of fear it ended. It is interesting to be told that the occasion—I do not say the root cause—of that war was the escape of a Zulu girl and her recapture by the Zulus in British territory.

I need not refer in this company to the great empires of history, of which none have survived intact as social organisations. But whatever the fate of the individual enterprise, the conception of power derived from the organisation of mankind has survived.

Now let us come to a conception of power in the universe so revolutionary that even to-day it remains no more than a conviction. I refer to the conception that all the forces in the universe, including those which underlie the development of man himself as a physical, social and moral being, are subject to principles which by analogy can be described as laws. Moreover, that those laws are essentially good if only because, being inevitable, they constitute the criterion of what is good, and, that in the knowledge and understanding of those laws—could man ever understand them—lies the knowledge of good and evil, and of man's ultimate destiny. This is a conception which, in a loose kind of way, is so often



taken for granted, that we forget how revolutionary such an idea was and is, and how profound are its implications. Its precise origin in point of history is, so far as I know untraced, but we can say that at one period at least—between roughly the seventh and the second century before the Christian era—such a conception had appeared in the East and in the Mediterranean, sometimes in the form of religious teaching and at other times in that of philosophical speculation.

What is the basis of this conception? Did man import the conception of order into the universe merely on the analogy of the partial order he had established in his own social microcosm and found to be better for his immediate purposes than absence of order? Or, may it be that in the search after the true basis and uses of power in the social organism, man is seeking for something real and ultimately discoverable because that and nothing else will make possible his survival and continued evolution as a rational species?

It is at any rate a fact that from this same period date the first recorded speculations on the basis, the nature and the purpose of authority in the social and political microcosm. It is obvious that the natural and political sciences have not kept pace in development, the one at different times seeming to outstrip the other. Men were of necessity experimenting in the social organism and getting empirical results long before the beginning of scientific experiment as we understand it; but, unlike the man of science, the ruler of men cannot control his experiment, and if one fails, he may be too late to try another.

Nevertheless, variations are discernible in the conception of power in the social sphere. As to its basis, it has been conceived as based on fear, on magic or its



equivalent, on worship and on rational acquiescence arising from understanding. Social power must from the earliest times have been recognised as accompanied by responsibility—if only a responsibility for the preservation of the ruler himself. The so-called democratic political thought of Greece recognised the responsibility of the State only as extending to the interests of those of its component individuals who were entitled to the full rights of citizenship. In mediæval Europe, States and their populations were patrimonies to be inherited or acquired by marriage or warfare; and to Bacon¹ the prime responsibility was for the preservation and aggrandisement of the State itself. That the State or the social organism should be responsible for providing the greatest scope for the physical, intellectual and moral development of all individuals within its confines is still a new conception. Linked with it is the conception of the structure of the State as a thing that itself must be open to change and development, in order to provide that changing environment in which man may continue his further evolution as a rational being.

As to the employment of power, some regard it as an evil to be avoided. Others would contrive a balance of authority in the social organism, to maintain just that essential degree of stability and material prosperity that may permit the development of the individual. Others again, conceive of power in the social organism as a thing to be centred in strong hands, in order that the individual life may be organised to fulfil the predetermined purposes of the ruler. One school of thought conceives the free working of the individual reason as the only means by which the true nature and uses of authority in the social organism can be ultimately discovered.

¹ Bacon, *Essay* 29.

Another sees men in the mass like a bar of soft iron, its molecules each magnetic but neutralizing each other, and needing only the application of an external magnetic force to draw them into unison and convert the inert mass itself into a powerful magnet to be employed by the master mind.

I do not say that in practice any of these conceptions is held and acted on to the exclusion of the other by any particular type of body politic. Democracies may be capricious, incomprehensible and tyrannical in no less degree than autocracies may have shown toleration and enlightenment. The most convinced believers in rational consent as the basis of authority may be led into the most drastic interference with individual liberty in the attempt to secure that environment of stability and prosperity without which social evolution cannot proceed. The believers in dominant personality may often trim their sails to the wind, but the differences in the underlying conception of authority remain.

Such then are some of the variants of men's conception of power in the social organism. Have they a comparative value and if so, by what standard can we value them? Is it possible to say that one is more likely to be on the main line of evolution than another?

Clearly no one can say that any of these conceptions has alone survived to the extinction of another. Yet this also is not surprising, for evolution does not work in a straight line, and the data of history for all their volume and variety are not comparable to the data of experimental science.

This is what Fisher says after completing a study beginning with primitive man and ending with Communism and Fascism :

"One intellectual excitement has, however, been



denied me. Men wiser and more learned than I, have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations, only one safe rule for the historian—that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen. This is not a doctrine of cynicism and despair. The fact of progress is written plain and large on the page of history; but progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next. The thoughts of men may flow into the channels which lead to disaster and barbarism.”¹

I venture to think, however, that this conclusion is not at variance with the conclusions of biology. Biological science has long given up the conception of evolution as a process free from chance or excluding the exercise of choice. Yet reviewing as it attempts to do, a period as far exceeding the known history of man as a millennium exceeds a day, science believes it can discern comprehensible developments if the period chosen be long enough. The problem for the political philosopher is whether he can forecast those developments, and whether the study of the natural sciences can help him to do so.

Let us try to project ourselves back to the age of the giant Dinosaur or the Pterodactyl of the Jurassic period. Could we have imagined that those great creatures would survive only as fossil remains? We do not know exactly what our own ancestors were like in those ages, but we do know that they, the earliest mammals, and the Dino-

1 *A History of Europe*. H. A. L. Fisher, Vol. I, Preface.



saurians were contemporaneous and sprang from the same common stock. What chance or choice caused that other branch of the family to break off and develop into the Dinosaurs while our ancestors developed by infinitely slow degrees into men, is still a matter for speculation. But when first the brothers separated and the cousins grew further apart, who could have known—as we believe that we know now—that the extreme and highly specialized development, however much more formidable in its own environment, was the one less likely to survive in a changing world?

Is it possible that some form of social organism will eventually emerge and survive as the most suitable environment made by man—or through man—for his further evolution? And if so, which of the social organisms that we know will be its parent or parents? May it be that here, too, the extreme manifestations are doomed to extinction? An interesting speculation!

Closing his address to this Society six years ago, your then President, Colonel Seymour Sewell said:

“I would on the other hand postulate that man has, or in the very near future will have, rendered himself so independent of his environment that it will no longer be able to affect his physical characters, and that if there is to be any further evolution, this must be the result of his own mental processes.”¹

That statement, I think, excludes the possibility of cataclysm brought about either by the forces of nature or by the abuse of man's own powers. But leaving that aside, does not Colonel Sewell's conclusion amount to this, that it is in the social rather than in the individual organism that we must look for evolution in the future?

¹ Annual Address to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1930-31.



I do not venture to state this as a theory—I merely put it forward as a speculation. But since the different groups into which mankind is divided can no longer, even if they would, isolate themselves one from another, it would seem possible that if man is to evolve as both a rational and a social being, there must also evolve a social microcosm wherein the basis, the nature and the uses of authority will be recognised universally and rationally both by those who exercise it and by those upon whom it is exercised.

Whether or not there will be any evolution on such lines must remain a matter of belief or lack of belief. Should it ever occur, it may not be in the time of any descendant of ours whose conceptions of the nature of power we can envisage with accuracy. But let us not fall into the error of assuming that such an evolution must naturally take place.

Once again, an analogy from biological studies is of interest. In the biological world, the individual organism bears traces of its primæval history and development, of which the significance may be discernible only to the man of science. Thus also, the mind of man is a complex entity with a long history. It may well be that in the differing political organisms of the world to-day lie differences not to be explained by causes within the scope of recorded history. If so, there is no reason to presume that the different races of the world will necessarily react in the same way to the same political, cultural and economic influences. We may well be still at the stage when each may require something distinctive in its political organism to satisfy some deep-laid tendency, different in essence and persisting through long periods of cultural or political assimilation, only to reassert itself at some later epoch.



In the German a combination of mysticism and docility with irrepressible vigour of race may be an underlying factor in the history of his social and political development. In Italy there is a people with proud memories of empire long disunited and politically impotent—a people whose history shows a strange combination of exuberance of talent and asceticism. When in Western Europe the temporal power of the Roman Emperors remained distinct from the power of the Church, was it an accident that the Orthodox Church became the Church of Russia—a Church identified completely with the temporal power—or was there then some tendency to absolutism that still expresses itself to-day?

I would not be so rash as to generalize about India, but it is, I think, true to say that in India, until recent times, the main current of thought was concerned with the development of the individual and the sanctity of his purely social environment, using the word "social" in its narrower sense. It regarded his reactions to mundane events as more important than the events themselves. The social organism was merely a medium in which man had to work out his own salvation, not a plastic medium susceptible of control, but a rigid and unalterable one. To such thought, the political structure was a mere superimposition and irrelevant so long as the social structure was kept intact. It was, I think Akbar,¹ who first conceived the practical possibility of a unified political, cultural, and possibly even, social organism for India as a whole—at about the same time as the first beginnings of national monarchies in Europe put a definite end to the conception of a unified political structure for Europe.

The conception of a socially and politically unified

¹ A Mogul Emperor of India.



India as a practical possibility, and the whole current of political thought that arises from that conception are modern in the extreme and directly attributable to the British connection. We already see, I state it merely as a fact and without any controversial implications, a conscious intellectual movement to sever that connection. Supposing it were severed? Is the tendency for unification so historically strong, so essential for the further evolution of the Indian peoples, that it must survive, or is its necessity so demonstrable to reason and is the power of reason so strong as to ensure the easy predominance of such a tendency?

These are reflections suggested by recorded history. But if tendencies arising from recorded history so strongly influence the minds of successive generations, may it not follow that the influences of unrecorded history are still extant and, in the strictest sense of the word, incalculable?

It is only on the assumption that all men are capable of evolving into completely rational beings, and that the influence of reason will eventually overcome environment, that we can conceive of the emergence and survival of one type of social organism. That assumption may be a conviction, but it is no more. But if so be that there is an evolution in the social organism, and if one conception of power may help us to understand and control that evolution, there is a need to seek out that conception not merely abstractly or *a priori*, but also by the patient study of phenomena.

To those who believe in the possibility of evolution, history rolls on like a mighty river ever seeking its way to the sea. It is not a canal cut straight to a clear destination, nor does its path lie down a broad valley leading direct to the ocean. It may run over rapids or

split into deltas,—a stratum of rock or a new impetus, beginning perhaps with a small and insignificant cut, may turn back or divert its course for centuries, and parts of it may dry up leaving on its dead banks the ruins of once famous cities.

Man, engrossed in contemporary events, stands on its bank, and seeing only the rush and swirl of the eddies or the desolate surface of some disconnected swamp asks himself whether what he surveys is river at all. Perhaps it is only an interminable whirlpool or a stagnant marsh, its surface broken now and then by bubbles only to relapse again into quiescence.

Some are content to watch its flow only hoping that it will not break its banks and engulf them in ruin. Others proclaim that they have found the main current, dig a channel here or build an obstruction there to guide or control it, not knowing and perhaps not caring whether they are leading the precious stream against an impenetrable ridge or diverting it into a futile backwater.

The student of recorded history standing on a little eminence, traces back its course till it soon disappears into the mists of time. He sees how it has come and speculates how it might have gone had this obstruction been removed or that channel been cleared. But he cannot divine what natural obstacles or what caprice of man may guide its course in the future.

To see its course as a whole, to comprehend the forces that drive it on, to envisage the country that it yet has to traverse, to find the main channel and to help it on its journey towards the sea—therein lies a task worthy, I think, of the highest intellects and the deepest learning.

II

LESSONS OF WAR¹

THE company to-night includes many men who have won distinction in varied walks of life, but I venture to think that nobody here to-night would surrender in exchange for any distinction the war medals that all of you are privileged to wear.

I know of a man—a temporary soldier—who at the end of the war left the army with quite a reasonable rank and a decoration for gallantry. I am not sure whether he is here to-night, but as the saying goes “No names no pack drill.” I am not out for pack drill at my time of life, so I shall keep his name to myself. Well, this unnamed individual has one decoration that I believe he values as highly as any that he wears. It is a 1914-15 star and inscribed on the back of it is not “Major X”, or “Captain X” but just “Sapper X,” and that is what makes it so valuable.

There is another decoration which every one of you wears, and it bears what I think must be the proudest inscription ever put upon a medal, “The Great War for Civilization.” No doubt there have been times during these succeeding years when men have scoffed at that inscription as an empty phrase or even worse—but never forget that to the men of the Empire who went into that

¹ Speech at Armistice Day Dinner. Calcutta, 11th Nov. 1936.



war those words were the plain truth. To them and to you in those early days it was a clear issue between civilization and brute force—and men who staked everything on that issue have had something put into their lives that neither time nor disillusionment can efface. They have shared an experience that binds together all over the Empire the comrades of the Great War, and if in these times of change and confusion there is one generation of men among whom the faith in individual liberty and free and ordered institutions still burns high, it is the generation of those who served the Empire in the Great War.

Of course everyone knows that there were quite a lot of things that spoiled the War, and one of them, I understand, was a thing called the "offensive spirit"—I am not referring to the rum ration—but to what I imagine must have been a form of misplaced martial ardour, diminishing in intensity the nearer one approached the actual scene of events. That spirit provoked, I am told, especially in quiet sectors—and on the part of those whose comfort was chiefly affected, quite a good deal of offensive language. Well, whatever it was, I am sure it was a most reprehensible thing—and the trouble is that the offensive spirit in another sense of the word looks like spoiling the peace as well if people are not careful. I only wish some people could take a lesson from the army in this respect, and one of the best ways of teaching them would, I suggest, be to give them a course of army boxing. I had the pleasure of seeing an army boxing tournament in Darjeeling,¹ and I can't help thinking what a splendid training it would be for people who disturb the peace of the world to be taught clean fighting and good temper in the way that the army teach it.

We in Bengal owe a good deal to the army. Quite

¹ Summer Capital of the Government of Bengal.



apart from their steadying influence on the side of order, the addition of a few battalions came like a breath of fresh air into an atmosphere that was distinctly overheated,—it wasn't just a question of so many rifles. There was more to it than that. I have heard of people who have been surprised and almost aggrieved that military officers should have interested themselves in trying to make things brighter and healthier for the civil population and especially for the younger generation. I, for one, believe that men trained in the tradition of the army, and placed in a position to spread that tradition in civil life and among the rising generation, are a real asset to the country as a whole. We are fortunate in them. We are fortunate, if I may say so, in General Lindsay¹ our District Commander. Those of us in Bengal who know what he has done, are grateful for the active sympathy and interest that General Lindsay has displayed in the welfare of the younger generation.

To-night is not a political occasion and we here are not directly responsible for the affairs of Europe and the world. But nobody who can recall the 11th of November 1918, can look at the world to-day without a sense of disappointment. In the days that followed the Armistice, men and women in the British Empire could believe that the shadow of fear had been lifted from the earth, and that the time had come to rebuild on better and more secure foundations. It is the tragedy of to-day that the spectre of fear is again stalking among the nations, and while they pray earnestly for peace, the people of Britain have come to realize that they must be strong enough of arm to be able to face the future with confidence and to help in restoring it among others. I share with you all the hope that their efforts

¹ Major Genl. G. M. Lindsay, C. B., C. M. G., D. S. O.

will succeed. For us in India there is a lesson to be learnt from what has happened in Europe. There is no more dangerous situation than one in which large masses of people are vaguely afraid. To be afraid of something definite may be a very good thing. To be in a state of fear without stopping to reason out what they are afraid of, is a highly dangerous situation for mankind in the mass, and it is the business of Governments to see that the masses don't get into that condition. If it is depravity that begets atrocities, it is more often than not fear that inspires reprisals, and once the vicious circle is closed, it is not easily broken. Here in India we stand on the threshold of a great opportunity—a chance that Europe might well envy—of seeing a continent of diverse races welded together in free and peaceful partnership. If it can be done, there will have been accomplished in India in two centuries an ideal that two thousand years of war have failed to bring to realization in Europe. But to do it demands that India shall have what Europe sometimes seems to lack—the protection and guidance of men strong enough to be unafraid themselves, and to teach its peoples that ordering themselves lawfully, they have nothing to fear. We have come to learn that the Great War for civilization did not end when the last shot was fired. It goes on still, and demands of us and the generations that are rising up, to follow us in the same spirit of service and comradeship that we have met to commemorate and renew to-night.

III

ARMISTICE¹

IT is a far cry now from the 11th of November, 1918. Yet the old soldiers who meet at Armistice Dinners do not seem to have parted entirely with their youth. There was a time when we were all promised that life would be a bed of roses once the War—perhaps this company would not misunderstand me if I said the sanguinary War—was ended. I doubt if many of you have found that promise fulfilled or even expect it to be fulfilled any longer. The long long trail still goes on winding and has not yet brought us to the land of our dreams. Most of us, I suppose, have realised long ago that if we ever want to get there, we shall need to do something more than merely dream about it. I have heard that an excellent way of disposing of all the troubles of life is to pack them up in your old kit bag. Doubtless many of you, recollecting your War-time experiences, have tried this method. But it is one thing to pack up your troubles in a bag and quite another to find some one else to carry the old kit bag for you. In spite of this rather gloomy retrospect, I must say that you seem to have survived pretty well. Neither the Twentieth Century Blues—nor, what was far more serious, the 1930 slump, have really succeeded in getting you down and

¹ Speech at Armistice Day Dinner. Calcutta, 11th Nov. 1935.

keeping you down. Some people say that old soldiers fade away—but looking around me to-night, I begin to doubt whether even that is true. I am reminded of those memorable lines of Shakespeare—"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety."¹ They were inspired, I have been told, by a lady who lived in Armentieres and was well known to all who served in the Hundred Years' War—but you know what these war histories are, and they sometimes have to be accepted with some reserve.

You know, perhaps better than I do, what is meant by "seeing red," and it would be futile to deny that there have been occasions when, in sudden exasperation after months of heavy strain, men must have been tempted to see red. But a commander, or a man responsible for orders and leadership, makes a poor leader if he starts seeing red when he ought to be seeing things in their natural colours. Judged by this standard, there are few of our officers who have not passed the test. Happily, for the last three years they have had the moral and practical support of the troops that General Lindsay now commands, and I cannot let this opportunity go by without saying how much we appreciate the help and comradeship of the soldiers in Bengal and how valuable their presence continues to be.

For this is a conflict not to be ended at any predetermined hour. There can be no armistice with terrorism so long as there remain organisations that possess the will and may acquire the means to do mischief. We believe, however, that to a large and, I hope, an increasing extent, the initiative has passed into our hands. Believing that it has, we want to use it wisely so that, to quote an old phrase, we may not win the war merely in

¹ *Antony and Cleopatra*—Act II., Sc. II.



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order to lose the peace. We shall not relax our vigilance or neglect our front, but the time has come when we must try more radical methods. That is one aspect, and only one, of the measures we have now inaugurated to deal both with the less hardened detenu in particular and with the problem of unemployment in general.

It is a real encouragement to know that the good wishes of ex-service men go with us in this attempt. After all, whatever the propagandists might have said, and whatever passions they might have aroused, who can believe that our men fought in the war out of a spirit of hatred or from pleasure in destruction? They fought and stuck to it, I like to think, because they believed in a decent, clean, deal all round and no nonsense either from brute force or subversive intrigues. Most men, I think, fought for simple, homely things—a farm somewhere in England, a plantation somewhere overseas, a business, a job in an office or a factory, perhaps, even a best girl—a sane decent life without hate or frightfulness, a reasonably free existence, where a man could let his neighbour live in peace and not be interfered with himself. These things and things like these were to ninety-nine men out of a hundred their background and their inspiration. A commonplace creed—the outlook of the ordinary man—but it is the ordinary man that governments have to govern, and what we here are now trying to do is just part of an attempt to give the ordinary man a chance, in the hope that given his chance he would sooner be an ordinary man than an abnormality. It is an uphill job, especially when so many of the younger generation in this country are out of harmony with their environment. But it is a job that has got to be tackled, and if we do not succeed in one way we shall have to find another. I only hope that the sympathy

which you have expressed with our efforts will find an echo in the hearts of those towards whose true welfare our efforts are directed.

But I have strayed away into politics and this is not a political occasion. I would rather that we should turn our minds back for a moment to the occasion for this gathering—the commemoration of the ending of the greatest armed conflict that history has known. The ugly spectre of war is again brooding over the world and it behoves all who can picture the dangers that loom ahead—dangers not to this nation or that but threatening civilization itself—to make their influence felt to avert any such disaster. I believe that the organisations of ex-service men throughout the world represent one of the most potent influences for peace to-day. I have never forgotten a remark that the late Sir Douglas Haig made to my Chief and me when we visited his Headquarters in France in July 1918. He said—I think he was deprecating the outcry in the press about certain alleged German atrocities—"you know, the British soldier has no ill will towards the Boche ; he knows too well what he has been up against." That is it. Wars are made in the main by people who hope to keep out of them, and there is a bond between the ex-service men of different countries, a bond created by dangers run and hardships and privations suffered in common, which I hope will prove strong enough in the end to give the necessary reinforcement to the collective efforts that are being made in the interest of Peace.

I apologize—I won't talk politics any more. I propose instead to tell you a story which is very nearly true. One night at dinner, during one of the usual lulls in the conversation, I happened to hear one of my guests remark that the most comfortable night he had ever



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spent was in a drain. As he was then staying in Government House, the remark, taken by itself, might seem to convey some reflection upon the comforts of that desirable residence. I gathered, however, from the subsequent context that he was referring to some experience in the Great War and not, as might have been maliciously suggested, to the aftermath of an Armistice Dinner. Well, I am still ignorant of the precise circumstances which rendered his night in a drain so comfortable, and I am afraid that none of you will be able to spend to-night in Government House. But I hope, at any rate, that none of you will be under the necessity of spending it in a drain.



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IV

SILVER JUBILEE¹

AT this time, when we are all engaged in celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of our beloved Sovereign, King George V, Emperor of India, and his most gracious Consort, Queen Mary, I should like to tell the people of Bengal why I feel that the occasion should stir all our hearts with feelings of profound thankfulness.

For a quarter of a century Their Majesties have shared the joys and sorrows of their subjects. It has been a period crowded with incident and, in a most exceptional degree, a time of stress and anxiety. Confronted at the outset by grave constitutional problems at home, soon to be plunged with his people into the maelstrom of the Great War, faced by all the distracting and distressing issues of post-war readjustment, forced to look on while the constituent parts of the Empire sought in various ways to escape from the trammels of a system which they had outgrown, the Sovereign, instinct with a sense of duty, and true to the highest traditions of his kingly office, has held himself on a pinnacle above the eddying currents of political controversy and has found, as I do not doubt, to his inexpressible joy, that the institution of the monarchy, in so many other countries

¹ Jubilee Broadcast Message. Calcutta, 6th May, 1935.



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discredited, has in the British Empire emerged as the strongest link binding the peoples of that Empire together—the one really stable element in an ever-changing complex.

To those who believe as I do, that in a world convulsed by doubts and fears, a world held in the grip of political and economic theories still largely untried, the sober, steady and tranquil policies pursued by the nations of the Empire will yet be the means of restoring confidence and stability, to those, I say, who take that view, the influence and example which have held the Empire together during a period of unexampled stress must stand for nothing less than a manifestation of Divine Providence.

It is by constant devotion to the interests of their people, and by the standard which they have always set in their public acts and their private relationships, that the King and Queen have been able to fulfil their exalted mission. How closely they are identified with the interests of their subjects can be illustrated by two references. When on the 11th November, 1918 the news of the Armistice reached London and a feeling of inexpressible relief and thankfulness surged through the nation's heart, an unconscious but uncontrollable impulse seemed to draw people of all classes to Buckingham Palace so that they might look on the King and Queen and share their joy with them. Again, during those bleak days early in 1929, when the King lay at death's door for weeks, the Palace was beset continuously by a mute crowd gathered for no rational purpose, but impelled by haunting anxiety and fear to be near their Sovereign in his hour of trial.

Such then are the King and Queen for whose continued preservation in health and activity we offer thanks



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and prayers to-day. When the King, after he had been on the Throne for one year, unveiled a memorial to Queen Victoria—a name particularly dear to India—he used words which could be used with equal truth and sincerity of King George himself. He said :

“As time passes and the years unfold, events are revealed in their true character and proportion. We are sure that the tribute we pay to-day will not be disputed by posterity. Her life was devoted to the discharge of her solemn public duty. Her authority was exercised on all occasions with sincere respect for constitutional usage and tradition. No Sovereign in history reigned over so many millions of mankind ; no ruler saw so many wonderful changes come to pass or witnessed such a vast expansion in the scale and power of human arrangements ; no reign in this kingdom ever prepared more hopefully the path of the future.”

The King told us in a message issued on his recovery from his severe illness that it had been his constant and earnest desire to gain the confidence and affection of his people, and last Christmas we heard from his own lips of his constant care for the peoples of India. Let us in Bengal during these celebrations give unmistakable proof of the place which he holds in our thoughts and our affections. God bless and save the King.

YOU all know the saying “Boys will be boys.” Similarly,¹ one might say, “Girls will be girls.” But the thought that is uppermost in my mind as I look at you all gathered here to-day is that boys will be men and girls will be women. You are the heirs of all that your forefathers

¹ Address to the school children. Darjeeling, 7th May, 1935.



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lived and worked and perhaps died for, and in a few more years you will step into your full inheritance. It will then be for you to carry on and bear the burden ; to try to succeed where your predecessors have failed and where they succeeded to carry their successes still further forward with the object of leaving the world in the end better than you found it.

This is the aim of all good men and women in life, and it is one which provides the most honourable and the most satisfying rule of conduct. Those who have modelled their lives on these lines are respected and admired the whole world over, no matter what their race, religion or station in life may be.

To lead this best kind of life is not easy for any one. It means a great deal of unselfishness and constant thought for others, and its starting point is almost always to be found in a devoted and loving family life, for the family is the nation and the whole world in miniature.

You will have plenty of opportunities in this year 1935 of studying one such life—that of our beloved and most gracious Sovereign, His Majesty King George V, Emperor of India. The ruler of more subjects than anybody who has ever lived in this world, with unusual temptations to give himself over to luxury and ostentation and pride, he has triumphed over these baser things and will be judged by history to be an infinitely greater man in consequence.

He has lived a life of service to others and of utter devotion to duty. For these things alone he is loved and respected, but what has particularly endeared him to his subjects is his happy family life and the obvious love and devotion his children and grand-children render to him as a father rather than as a monarch.

And to-day we are celebrating his Silver Jubilee—a



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time of jubilation and thanksgiving for 25 years of good rule and devoted service to his subjects, which gives us all an opportunity of giving expression to our gratitude to him for all he has done for us, and to the Queen who has shared all his troubles and has set an example to the Empire of true womanhood and motherhood.

Remember this day, and with the remembrance bear in mind the stirring example Their Majesties have set you of how to lead your lives.

And now, off with you and be happy, for that is what the King and Queen would wish you to be to-day.

V

BANE OF LAWLESSNESS¹

I must first of all gratefully acknowledge the sentiments of loyalty to the Throne and Person of His Majesty to which expression has been given in your addresses. I must thank you also for the cordial welcome which you have extended to me on my first visit to your port and town, and for the good wishes which you have been kind enough to express for the success of my period of office in Bengal.

I am glad to have assurances which have been voiced to-day of the loyalty of the people of this district ; and I venture to say that an active exhibition of that loyalty might do more than anything else to restore normal conditions here and to dispense with the necessity for these special measures which the outrages of the past two years have compelled Government to adopt.

I have read something of the past history of Chittagong, but you will pardon me if I say that, as Governor, I am of necessity at this moment more interested in the stormy history of more recent times than in the remote periods to which reference has been made.

I do not wish to traverse again facts and events which are sufficiently in the memory of most of those

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Chittagong, 16th August, 1932.



present here to-day. Nor do I wish to suggest that this district of Chittagong has any monopoly, unfortunately, of the cult of terrorism. But this district saw the first manifestation of the present outbreak of revolutionary crime, and it is in this district that Government have been obliged to take special measures designed to restore respect for lawful authority and to bring offenders to justice. These facts prompt me to speak out and it is not inappropriate, I think, that I should take the opportunity which this occasion affords to address you, and through you a wider audience, on the very grave menace to democratic government, indeed to any ordered society, which the existence of an active terrorist conspiracy constitutes, and on the imperative necessity which exists for any Government, and indeed for any people which values public or individual liberty, to use every means at its disposal to crush such a movement.

I am speaking now, I think I may assume, to an audience which entirely disapproves of terrorism and would gladly see its poison eliminated from the body politic of this Province. Let me then say at once that for no one of you can it be said that "you have nothing to do with terrorism." Believe me, you have everything to do with terrorism. It is *your* liberty that is at stake,—your liberty to speak, to vote, and within the limits of the law, to live as you like. It is your liberty that is at stake and your battle that Governments are fighting. That is the first thing which I would ask you to remember. You cannot stand aside as though you could remain unaffected by the result of this struggle. You are in truth very closely concerned,—everyone who wishes to see a decent standard of public life maintained in this country is vitally affected by the terrorist movement. Your merely passive loyalty is really of no service to Government



or to your fellow-citizens. It is your active loyalty that alone can be of value.

And then as regards restriction of the freedom of peaceful and law-abiding citizens—Ordinances and legislation arming the Executive with special powers are the necessary reply to the challenge of the terrorist. They are directed solely against those who break the law, and it is almost a truism to say that they are not intended to hamper those who merely wish to pursue their legitimate business and to proceed in peace "on their lawful occasions." A certain amount of inconvenience there may be,—the precautions of the authorities must take account of the fact that the terrorist wears no uniform, but poses as a peaceful citizen and operates by stealth, even employing as far as possible irresponsible agents for the actual perpetration of his detestable crimes. If, for the time being, the peaceful public have unfortunately to submit in some small degree to restrictions and inconveniences, whose fault is it? You had certainly no restrictions until the terrorist brought them upon you. And is it not far better that you should suffer such temporary inconvenience which I have been told repeatedly has been very little felt by the bulk of the inhabitants and has been made the occasion for very few complaints, than that you should live out your lives under the constant menace of an unseen foe who knows no law?

Really, I am afraid there is a great deal of loose thinking on the subject of the Ordinances and of legislation like the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act. Such measures are frequently characterized as "repressive." Repressive they undoubtedly are in this sense,—that they are intended to put down, or in other words to "repress," lawlessness. No Government can disregard

its primary obligation in that matter, particularly when lawlessness takes the form of murder and attempt at murder and of robbery with violence. The quickest and most effective method of getting rid of the Ordinances in Chittagong and elsewhere is to unite with Government for the suppression of the evil which the Ordinances are designed to combat. To the extent to which Government may be denied the support of the general public in this matter, their task is rendered the harder,—but the obligation which rests upon Government is not thereby weakened.

I am well aware that it is sometimes asserted that Government are working on entirely wrong lines, and that altogether different measures offer the real solution of the problem. Apart from the fact that those who take this line have not, so far as I am aware, made any serious constructive proposal for combating the menace, which would not involve a surrender to the forces of disorder that would spell disaster for the future of this Province, they are, in my judgment, in their objection to penal measures, betraying a failure to diagnose the true position. The suppression of lawlessness by penal measures is as important in the interests of the community as of Government itself. There is, if you will allow me to say so, far too great a tendency among those who do not themselves believe in violent methods, to regard violent crime as directed merely against Government, whereas in fact it undermines the whole social fabric. The man whose house is broken into during a political dacoity is under no misapprehension on this point. But have you realised how much further the canker goes? Can you be blind to the fact that your young men, just when they are reaching the age to be of service to themselves, their families and their country, are being seduced



to paths of violence? Can you be indifferent to the damage which is being caused to the economic interests of the country? Have you considered what will be the position of an autonomous Government if the tradition has been established that where a Government is unpopular, violence may legitimately be employed by those who disapprove of its policy against its agents and against those who publicly support it in the Press or on the platform? And it is the fate, remember, of all Governments, even the most democratic, to incur unpopularity from time to time. Can you be indifferent,—you who look to Government for financial support for so many of your schemes of local improvement,—can you be indifferent to the strain imposed on the finances of Government in fighting this menace? Have you thought ahead and pictured the position of the autonomous Government shortly to be established, dependent as it will be on its own credit and with no other resources to draw upon than those which a final and irrevocable financial settlement will have left to it? How far will those resources go, and what will that credit be worth if the virus of terrorism has not been completely expelled?

Government themselves, I assure you, are not blind to the tragedy of the position. Year after year our young men are growing up,—aye and our girls now,—to find no outlet for their energies. Unemployment is not the root cause of this movement, but unemployment provides one of the fields of recruitment, and the dread of unemployment predisposes the minds of our young men to the morbid and fanatical outlook which the leaders of this movement seek to induce. Unemployment is not a problem for which Government unaided can find a solution. For this the co-operation of all the best elements of the community is required. But the capacity of

Government to face the task and to co-operate with those whose desire is to help in this vital matter must be gravely impaired so long as they are preoccupied and their funds are locked up in fighting the terrorist menace.

In spite of these handicaps, however, we are constantly exploring the possibility of finding new methods of developing the resources of the country and of providing new channels into which the energies of our youth may be directed. This is a matter in which we can legitimately claim the whole-hearted co-operation of all who have the welfare of their country at heart.

Co-operation in this matter, if attended with success, will go far towards reducing the field of recruitment in which the terrorist organiser works and finds his prey. But do not for a moment suppose that the introduction of constitutional reforms on the one hand and the improvement, on the other, of facilities for securing employment will of themselves suffice to put a limit to this subversive movement. There are men at large who have either been convicted already of heinous charges or who are wanted for trial on such charges. These men and others like them will, I fear, continue to be a danger to society and a perpetual focus of disaffection until they are brought to justice or convinced, by the pressure of the law and of public opinion, that their's is a cause and a method with which the people of Bengal will have no truck. That is a matter in which again you, who disapprove of violence, can be of the greatest assistance to Government. It is you who can create the atmosphere in which this pernicious doctrine of violence must perish. It is you who can make the countryside unsafe for those whose intentions are suspect and whose proclivities are dangerous. I believe that if you and those whom you represent would only



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respond whole-heartedly to this appeal, you would not only be showing a proper spirit of patriotism and true citizenship but would speedily render it unnecessary for Government to impose any restrictions in your district. The remedy is in your hands. Until you voluntarily discharge the obligations of citizenship it will be necessary for Government to supplement the ordinary law in ways which neither we nor you desire to perpetuate. In the meantime, so far from being able to relax the powers which at present we possess under an Ordinance of the Governor-General, we have felt it necessary to ask the Legislative Council of the Province to give statutory sanction to those powers for a term of years at least, and the Bill has just emerged from a Select Committee. It is my earnest hope that Council will pass the Bill. But it is still more my hope that here and elsewhere in Bengal there will before long be such a manifestation of public opinion against terrorism and all the evil with which it is fraught, that the Bill, when passed, will remain a dead letter,—a reservoir of power on which neither we nor our successors in an autonomous Government will have to draw.

VI

STATE MECHANISM¹

IN the interesting speech to which we have just listened, the Chairman spoke of engineers as being individually inarticulate. May he be forgiven !

I greatly appreciate the opportunity which this gathering of the Bengal Centre affords me of meeting members of the Institution of Engineers of this and the neighbouring Provinces. I have often thought that the task of the statesman or general administrator has much in common with that of the engineer. He, like you, has to measure resistances, to estimate the strength of the materials with which he has to work, as well as the forces against which he has to contend, and not infrequently he has to design and build bridges ! You engineers, whatever your branch may be, may justly claim to belong to a great profession and one which inherits great traditions. Though your place among the civil professions has won but tardy recognition, the annals of the last century and a half teem with great figures in the engineering world,—the Stephensons, Telford, Rennie, de Lesseps, Siemens, Bessemer and Sir Benjamin Baker are names which spring to mind, and here in Bengal there is one whose career and achieve-

¹ Speech at the Institution of Engineers' Dinner. Calcutta, 23rd Feb. 1934.

ments every young Indian engineer should contemplate with pride,—finding in them both inspiration and encouragement,—I refer to my friend Sir Rajendra Nath Mookerjee.¹ In that period men of your profession have contributed more perhaps than those of any other to the material progress of the world, and we in Calcutta have a special reason to be grateful to the engineers of the Improvement Trust² for their work in repairing the damage which a lack of town-planning engineers in the past had wrought in our city.

There is still the greatest scope for your ability and labour in a country like India, which notwithstanding the existence of many impressive monuments of engineering skill, is still largely undeveloped.

Engineering has been described in a classic document as the “Art of directing the great sources of power in Nature for the use and convenience of man.” The conception is a lofty one, and when I reflect upon the unharnessed natural forces that from time to time manifest themselves in this vast country, I am divided between admiration for your courage and high ambition and amazement at your temerity. Only think of the titanic energy let loose for the crucial moments of the recent earthquake,³ or of the mighty rivers of this deltaic region which pursue and will continue to pursue their secular movements in complete disregard of the puny efforts of mankind to control them.

As it happens I had to make a speech some years ago at a dinner similar to this happy function—an annual

¹ Late senior partner of Martin & Co., and Burn & Co., two of the foremost Indian Engineering firms.

² The Calcutta Improvement Trust. Established 1911.

³ The historic earthquake in Bihar which devastated a large portion of that province.



dinner of the Institution of Civil Engineers. In search of enlightenment, if not of wisdom, I took the precaution of looking up beforehand the word "Engineer" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. At first my searches were somewhat ill-rewarded. I had consulted an early edition of somewhere about the time of the Franco-Prussian War¹ and the article,—reprinted, I doubt not from a still earlier edition,—carried me little further than the Pyramids, though I think I came across casual references also to Stonehenge.² Then I looked up the latest edition of that remarkable work and there, I must confess, I succeeded beyond expectation. This edition, I believe, was produced largely with the aid of gentlemen from the farther side of the Atlantic. They had some refreshing ideas on the subject of the professional engineer. If ever it should happen that any engineer present here to-night were to feel depressed or to lose confidence in himself, in short to find himself in danger of suffering from what it is fashionable to call an inferiority complex, I would confidently recommend that article to him as a tonic. I find that "So diversified are the services required of professional engineers throughout the wide range of industries, public utilities and governmental work, and in the discovery, development and conservation of resources, that men of extremely various personalities and physique may achieve success. Qualifications include intellectual and moral honesty, courage, independence of thought, fairness, good sense, sound judgment, perseverance, resourcefulness, ingenuity, orderliness, application, accuracy and endurance. An engineer should have

¹ Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71, in which France lost her provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, and paid Germany a War indemnity of £ 200,000,000.

² The most imposing megalithic structure in Britain.



ability to observe, deduce, apply, to correlate cause and effect, to co-operate, to organize, to analyze situations and conditions, to state problems, and to direct the efforts of others. He should know how to inform, convince and win confidence by skilful and right use of facts. He should be alert, ready to learn, open-minded but not credulous. He must be able to assemble facts, to investigate thoroughly, to discriminate clearly between assumption and proven knowledge. He should be a man of faith, one who perceives both difficulties and ways to surmount them. He should not only know mathematics and mechanics, but he should be trained to methods of thought based on these fundamental branches of learning".¹ And then after detailing an exhaustive catalogue of virtues, inherited and acquired, which I am perfectly confident all those present here to-night possess to a high degree, the writer goes on to say "Having been endowed more or less completely with qualifications and capacities requisite for a professional engineer, and having developed them with the aid of educational and other institutions and contacts provided by civilized communities, the engineer is under obligation to consider the sociological, economic and spiritual effects of engineering operations, and to aid his fellow-men to adjust wisely their modes of living, their industrial, commercial and governmental procedures, and their educational processes, so as to enjoy the greatest possible benefit from the progress achieved through our accumulating knowledge of the universe."² I can only say that I hope you realized that you were such wonderful people ; if you did, I can further marvel at your modesty.

During the past year it has fallen to me to open two

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Ed. 1937. Vol. 8, p.443.

² *Ibid.* p.443.

engineering works of some magnitude, the Dam and Weir at Rondia and the new Teesta Bridge. With regard to the latter may I say parenthetically that the perils of the Peshok Road, as I think my A. D. C., Capt. Methuen, would bear out, were as nothing to the perils that he and I had previously faced in crawling to the far side across the arch of the bridge through the lattice work before the process of shuttering began. Both of these works, the Weir and the Teesta Bridge, I am glad to think, have withstood the test of the earthquake. It is true that the bridge was at first reported to be very seriously cracked in the middle, but the cracks proved to be only the expansion joints, and the cost of making good all the damage was subsequently estimated at Re. 1-8 for replacing a few flakes of plaster. Both, I am confident, are works of which, not only for public utility but as examples of engineering skill the Province may justly be proud. As you know, my Government are giving close attention to the problem of economic reconstruction. Much of what we envisage in this connection is perhaps outside the immediate scope of the engineer and concerns rather finance and applied economics. There will however, be many problems that will call for the science and the skill of the engineer. The problem of the regeneration of the decadent areas in West Bengal is an example. We hope that the Damodar Scheme may be only a beginning. There is also the problem of communications,—roads, railways (though these are a Central rather than a Provincial matter) and waterways. As the Chairman has hinted, we are undertaking a systematic survey of our road problem to ensure that the application of the money received from the motor and petrol taxes—developing sources of revenue, I hope,—shall proceed not haphazard but in accordance with a considered plan,—a



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plan of developing existing communications of all kinds by the provision of bridges and the construction of feeder roads.

I heartily endorse what has been said about the importance of maintaining a really high professional standard among engineers. So much depends upon the sound quality of your work—the results of shoddy work may be disastrous—that the public are entitled to an assurance that those who bear the hall-mark of your association—if not endowed, as we were led by the *Encyclopaedia* to expect, with all the virtues—are at all events men of sound training and proved capacity.



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I

ANDERSON KHAL¹

IT is not the usual practice of the Governor of this province to visit subdivisional headquarters, and in fact the time at his disposal would not allow of such a practice being established. Nor perhaps is the reopening of the Kurulia Khal, considered merely in terms of length, depth and breadth, an irrigation project of such magnitude as would normally call for a special visit from the head of the province—however great its importance to the locality. But in this instance there are features that lift your achievement out of the sphere of local activity and give it an importance to the Province as a whole.

Practically the whole of the earthwork in the re-ex-cavation of the Kurulia Khal, including the making of a road along one of its banks, has been done by voluntary labour. Over a length of some 3 miles, nearly 74 lakhs of cubic feet of earth have been excavated voluntarily by people of all classes unaccustomed to doing work of this kind. The spirit has caught on in other parts of the subdivision, and in other districts also people are coming forward to emulate your example. It is for that reason that I have come here to-day.

To my mind, the manner in which you have accomplished this work represents one of the greatest advances

¹ Speech at the opening of the "Anderson Khal," 11th July, 1936. Khal—a canal.

that I can conceive in the life of rural Bengal and sets an example which, if properly followed up, may have far-reaching consequences to the wealth and happiness of the people of this province. It has brought out into the open the wealth that lies concealed in energy so long dissipated and lacking in co-ordination.

Wealth does not consist of money. Money is but its symbol. Its real material lies hidden in earth and sun, water and air—in the uncontrolled forces of nature and in the physical, mental and spiritual activity of mankind. Such wealth lies locked up in the treasury of nature and man possesses two keys that can unlock it—those keys are intellect and character. It needs vision to see the possibilities, foresight and patience to work out the details. It needs character to provide both the leadership and the stamina that is needed to get down to hard work and carry it through inspite of obstacles. In carrying through this work, you have shown that rural Bengal possesses these qualities—that they are only waiting for an outlet, and that given the vision and leadership there is wealth lying ready to hand.

For a work of this kind is wealth—wealth that can make the whole country richer and no one poorer. Nearly three years ago I attempted in a speech in Calcutta to review some of the economic problems of Bengal. I spoke of the necessity of a sustained effort to solve the problems of rural economy in the province. Much has been said both before and since then, and much has been written, about the possibilities of economic planning, about the necessity for a rise in the price of crops, about the need of more ready money. I do not deny that there is much to be done by economic planning under whatever name you choose to call it. I do not deny that the world at large is suffering from the low prices of crops



and staple products ; but we cannot sit with our hands folded waiting for the time when sanity will return to the economic world and the prices of products will rise. Nor can we be misled by easy talk about cheap money. Money, as I have already said, is not wealth ; it may oil the economic machine but it will not provide it with fuel. Wealth must be looked for in productive energy wisely directed.

In that same speech, three years ago, I ventured to say—"this province is not poor either in natural resources or in man-power ; but there must, I feel, be some maladjustment somewhere in a system which keeps a vast agricultural population groaning under a load of debt, eking out a narrow and penurious existence and yet, in most districts, lacking useful occupation for many months of the year."

As regards the problem of debt and as regards other methods of improving what I may call the monetary aspect of rural economy in the province, my Government and I may claim not to have been idle within the practical limits of the problem. But I am glad to know that here in Brahmanbaria, and I believe elsewhere also, men of vision and leadership have given practical demonstration of the manner in which the problem can be attacked from another side—by the development of man-power usefully applied. I repeat what I have said previously about a vicious circle. Rural Bengal, in too many places, is suffering from a vicious circle—a deteriorated countryside, ill-health, lethargy and poverty.

You have shown one point at which the circle can be broken. You have understood a lesson that is at once very simple and very hard to learn in practice. When men are up against obstacles, when energy has been

sapped and no sign of help is forthcoming from outside, then is the time for men to stand up and help themselves. In giving this striking demonstration you have rendered good service to the province as a whole. I am grateful to you for doing it and happy to have my name associated with it.

I have been impressed also with the stimulating catalogue of your activities. It is an impressive list ranging from the clearance of water hyacinth to the propagation of improved crops and the establishment of a circulating library ; it testifies to life-giving activity in every sphere of rural development.

And now, though I have no wish to cast even the smallest of clouds over this happy occasion, I have to utter a word of warning. I have said productive energy creates wealth, but it creates wealth only so long as it is controlled and co-ordinated. In dealing with rivers and *khals* in Bengal you are dealing with natural forces which it is not always possible for the layman to understand. An alteration of the countryside, even though it may be an improvement, may involve damage to other interests—damage that has to be paid for. In the present instance I am glad to say there is little apprehension of the waters of this *khal* getting out of control and having unforeseen effects in other places ; but you have been faced with the necessity of paying compensation to individuals whose lands have been absorbed. Moreover, the reopening of the *khal* has required immediate measures for the protection of the railway bridge, and if the *khal* is to be of service, subsequent alterations to the bridge will be essential. I am assured that the expense involved by these necessities is specific and limited. But we are all aware that estimates are liable to be exceeded and I trust in this instance that will not be the case. It sometimes



happens that a person whose land is affected makes an exorbitant claim. As regards that I can only say that any person who made an unfair claim or showed an unreasonable or selfish attitude with a desire to make personal profit out of an undertaking such as this—any person, I say, who took up that attitude would be justly deserving of the censure of the whole community.

At the same time, both for your own benefit and for that of other districts in the future, I should be failing in my duty if I did not make it clear that Government will not, as a matter of course, be in a position to solve such difficulties by undertaking commitments incurred without their prior knowledge and consent. I must also stress the point that in dealing with irrigation or drainage schemes the consequences of action without the best technical advice are apt to be extremely serious, and I would impress upon you and upon all others engaged in the work of rural uplift in the districts, the necessity of first obtaining competent advice from the responsible department of Government. I know that in such matters Government seems to move slowly and it may well be that to do justice to the rising spirit and enterprise of the countryside, Government itself may be obliged both to strengthen its technical resources and to expedite its processes. Your legislators of the future may have every justification in putting pressure upon future Ministries with this end in view, but I trust that those who are responsible for leadership of the countryside will bear in mind the necessity not merely for inspiring effort but for directing it with forethought and prudence.

Do not think, however, that the existence of difficulties detracts from the value or potentialities of co-ordinated voluntary work. There are plenty of this kind that can be carried out safely and without great

expenditure of actual money. Moreover, the methods you have adopted here can be applied in other directions to change the face of Bengal. Such methods are already fighting water hyacinth. The same methods can clear jungles, clean up insanitary villages, attack the breeding grounds of malaria, re-excavate silted tanks or fill up or drain stagnant and insanitary pools. They could, in course of years, turn the countryside of Bengal into the garden that it ought to be. With a cleaner countryside, health will follow. With improved health will come improved energy, and with the habit of standing up against difficulties will come the strength and independence of character of men who have proved their worth by sustained and constructive effort. How different that beneficent cycle would be from the vicious circle to which I, a moment ago, referred !

I do not want to talk politics, but I cannot refrain from recalling the tragic wastage of energy and idealism that too often in this province have been poured out fruitlessly in sterile political agitations that have brought wealth to nobody, have inflicted misery on thousands of families and have left nothing behind them, but an aftermath of weariness and disillusionment. I cannot help drawing the contrast and wondering how much wealthier would Bengal be to-day if all that energy had been turned into creative channels.

Let me now quote a few facts and figures. The value of the work that has been done by voluntary labour on the re-excavation of this *Khal* is estimated at the ordinary rates payable by the Public Works Department of Government to be 37,000 rupees. If that money had to be collected and expended, there would have been assessments, collecting officers, accounts, objections, processes for recovery and all the elaborate machinery of



administration that is involved in the raising of public taxation. There would have been contractors, supervisors, muster rolls, pay bills and all the procedure that is involved in the expenditure and audit of public money. This must be added to the real value of the wealth that you have produced and the total result will be over forty thousand rupees. Of the workers, the bulk came from 13 Unions¹ and the Municipality of Brahmanbaria—but as the enthusiasm spread, thousands of workers came from more distant places.

Your principal wealth in the rural areas does not consist of hard cash. You sustain yourselves for the most part, by the actual produce of your land, which provides you to a large extent with food and the primary necessities of life. You need money for the payment of your rent, for the purchase of oil, cloth, medicine, for education, and the performance of those social ceremonies that religion or custom make obligatory and—in happier times—for the provision of those few luxuries that may come your way. Money to you, if I may say so, is not the milk but the cream of the milk, and any demand that is made in cash is a demand on the cream; it is a demand on that kind of wealth of which you have least. Your real surplus of wealth lies in the long days of comparative leisure during certain periods of the year and in the latent energy for which so long no fruitful outlet has been provided.

I do not believe that this source of wealth was left untouched in olden days. Travel over the countryside in many parts of Bengal and you will see the work of

¹ Local areas formed under the Village Self-Government Act V of 1919, containing provisions for dispensing civil and criminal justice as well as for looking after the general welfare of the Unions so constituted.

your ancestors. To quote one instance : you will find large and imposing tanks of great age. Look at the map of such tracts of country and you would say that the neighbourhood must be prosperous and well supplied with works of public utility. But go into the villages and you will find that those tanks which once were deep and held good drinking water are silted up, covered with weeds and have become the breeding ground of malaria. Have you ever asked yourselves who dug them and why have they fallen into neglect ? You may be told that the zemindars¹ in olden days dug them and that since then the zemindars have gone away and the countryside is languishing. Do you think that the zemindars in the olden days always paid for these works in cash ? Do you think that they had an elaborate Public Works Department and an intricate system of muster rolls, contracts and all the check and countercheck of audit ? Or do you realise that—whether by the powers of inspiration or of oppression, they made themselves the leaders of the people, whether by persuasion or compulsion,—they took care that those things that were for the good of the countryside should somehow or other be carried out ? I am not denying that the kind of rule that made such things possible was incompatible with the development in British India of conceptions of freedom and civic liberty. But I do say that if men are to be worthy of their freedom, they must replace, by their own initiative and by their own hard work for the public good, the driving force that in other days was supplied by the power of despotic rulers. In the work that has been done here, and in other efforts of a similar

¹ Strictly means, a landlord holding landed property under the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, but is often used to indicate all landlords.



nature that I have heard of from elsewhere in the province, I hope and believe that I can discern a new awakening to the responsibilities of liberty, a new realisation of the meaning of manhood and patriotic service. If that be so, those who have set their hands to this task, have accomplished far more than the tangible results that we see before us to-day. They have opened up one of the brightest chapters in the history of rural Bengal.



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II

RURAL UPLIFT¹

WHEN the additional garrison came to Bengal it brought with it, you will agree, more than the armed force it represented or the direct moral effect of seven additional battalions. It brought officers who had the opportunity of bringing a fresh point of view to bear upon local problems—officers, perhaps, who were less encumbered with the details of routine and less preoccupied by the constant struggles of the previous two years than were the local officers of the Government of Bengal. And advantage was taken of this opportunity to appoint to work, in an intermediate position between the civil and military authorities, a number of officers under the designation of Military Intelligence Officers. In the beginning Government naturally concentrated their attention upon weak points requiring defence and upon direct methods of counter attack against the terrorist menace, but as soon as the immediate situation began to be got more firmly into hand the scope of activity naturally began to widen. The local Government had at their disposal in Bengal, for the first time for many years, a number of officers who had the time and the opportunity to a degree which the District Officers had never had, or at least had not had for a long time, to get in direct touch with the

¹ Speech at Conference held at Government House, Dacca, 13th July, 1936.



people and exert their own powers of leadership and example. Simultaneously with the easing of the immediate pressure, District and Subdivisional Officers themselves were able to devote more time to those constructive methods of combating terrorism and other dangerous or unwholesome tendencies—methods that to a large extent can now be brought under the familiar general term, "rural uplift."

In emphasising the part the Military Officers placed in Bengal were able to play, I do not wish for a moment to give you the impression that I mean anything derogatory to the activities of our own District Officers in the past. Very far from it. In essence the point of view from which the District Officer and the Military Intelligence Officer approach the common problem is the same. But the latter has had, as I have said, the very great advantage of coming to the problem fresh and of being untrammelled by the very heavy routine work that unfortunately burdens all his colleagues in the civil administration. Apart from all that, there has been, we think, in the course of the last few years a growing realisation of the fact that the function of the District Officer and his immediate co-adjutors is kinetic and not static. It is not perhaps a suitable time for me now to examine the reasons for this change in view. Some people may think that in the early years of the present Reforms there was a tendency on the part of the officers of Government to regard themselves more as the impartial executors of a higher policy, or the detached administrators of rules and orders, rather than as the active leaders of the people. That at any rate is an attitude that I have personally heard justified by Government servants of experience. Perhaps, also it is true that the District Officer felt himself in the position of being more a

6 bulwark of the administration, and consequently a target for anti-Government activities, rather than an actual dynamic force in the initiation of projects of local value. I do not know how far the attitude of apparent tolerance of anti-Government activities, which Government itself appeared to be adopting a few years ago, may have tended to encourage such a frame of mind. If it did, then perhaps the distinctly active attitude latterly taken up by Government was an important factor in reversing such an outlook on the part of its officers. But whatever be the cause the fact remains that during these last few years there has been, not only in this province but throughout India, a great impetus towards what may be called constructive local activity by District Officers. Many have taken the initiative in carrying out in their districts work of reconstruction along the lines generally approved by Government. I do not say for a moment that this is the first time that such work has been done, for I am very well aware that it has been an old tradition of the administrative services to promote beneficent activities in their districts, and it may be that it is due to the closer contact between Government itself and the people, that Government in these latter days have displayed more interest in the constructive work of their officers, and more anxiety to give publicity to such work in a desire perhaps to share in the credit for it. Be that as it may, this feature of the District Officer's work is one which I have no doubt has come to stay and one on which an autonomous Government is likely to lay more stress in the future than has sometimes been laid in the past.

8 A further lesson that has been learnt in the fight against terrorism is the need for co-ordination of effort. At a fairly early stage it was found necessary to call into



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activity for this purpose the whole machinery of Government ignoring departmental barriers. Local officers of whatever department, were called upon not only to be answerable for the conduct of their own families, but to take active steps in combating subversive or terroristic propaganda, and it was found in practice that the only authorities capable of co-ordinating their efforts were Commissioners of Divisions and District and Sub-divisional Officers. This lesson of co-ordination learnt in times of trouble is one that has been applied for constructive purposes and it would be the greatest of misfortunes if that lesson were forgotten in what one may hope will be happier times in future.

What I have said may serve to indicate the attitude of mind in which I have approached this conference. I need only add, if General Lindsay will allow me to do so, that we are fortunate in having in command of the Presidency and Assam District a General Officer of active mind and wide sympathies. In the course of his travels in the province, I know he has talked freely with people of all kinds and classes, and his interest in our problems prompted him a short time ago to have compiled an account of the main features of constructive work done by Military Intelligence Officers, and to send this compilation to me with suggestions of his own. It was from that memorandum of his that the idea of the present Conference sprang. The object of the Conference, as you will gather from the agenda, is to compare notes and pool experience regarding the various forms the constructive work done by District and Military Intelligence Officers may best take; to consider in what respects direct help and inspiration from Government is necessary and practicable; to suggest means of encouraging what I have referred to as a dynamic outlook and lastly to consider how best



to preserve, and if possible improve for purposes both of administration and of constructive work a system of co-ordination of effort between all officers of Government to whatever department they may belong.

You will have observed that we have included in the agenda two items relating to the conduct of officers in connection with the forthcoming elections and with the attitude to be taken up by officers towards organisations of cultivators. It has been thought necessary to include these items because no discussion of the possibility of more active constructive work by District Officers could be complete without having very clear ideas as to how such activities may impinge on political and economic movements, and what the attitude of District Officers must be towards those movements.

As regards the various aspects of rural uplift, all of you have received copies of a memorandum prepared by the Publicity Officer of Government from such materials as he has been able to obtain in the time at his disposal. This memorandum does not pretend to be a complete account, still less does it pretend to be an assessment of the achievement of individual districts or individual officers in this sphere of activity. It is merely a statement showing the lines followed in certain places which might be found useful in other places. Our object will be achieved if we can in this conference crystallize opinion regarding those lines of advance that are most likely to be of universal application. I am quite sure that there is no lack of constructive ideas in the districts. But the men who have those ideas, are often too busily engaged in putting them into practice to be able to devote the time that would be required to write reports about them and send them to Government. Moreover, if such suggestions had to be formally examined by Government



and formally circulated with their recommendation to other districts, the process would be long and involved. There would, I suppose, be the further danger that unless a practical suggestion were acted on at once it might pass merely into a file and come to rest in due course on, let us hope, the appropriate rack in the Collectorate Record Room. I would be interested to have your views as to whether any purpose would be served by the issue of periodical bulletins somewhat on the lines of the memorandum now issued, to which officers from all parts of the province could contribute in readable form, their suggestions, to be edited and circulated as a bulletin of suggestions that might perhaps be found useful, but would not carry the formal imprimatur of Government.

One other point and I have finished. If rural uplift work is to be of value, it must be continuous. It is no good for one Collector¹ to have a pet scheme of his own which his successor may abandon in favour of another. On the revenue and criminal side of the administration, continuity has been provided for by a regular system of recorded inspections which has developed side by side with an elaborate code of manuals. Heaven forbid that the work of rural uplift should ever develop on these formal stereotyped lines ; but I think the time has come to find out some method by which a reasonable degree of continuity can be secured. One suggestion has been that the general lines of development for each district, as well as the particular projects on which work is needed, should be mapped out and put on paper by the District Officer in consultation with his direct subordinates and the officers of other departments in his district. The plan so mapped out should be discussed with the Commissioner

¹ District Magistrate, usually of the Indian Civil Service.



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and deposited as a district plan, to be added to or modified as necessary, but not to be either abandoned or materially changed without the knowledge and consent of the Commissioner, whose duty it would be to look into this matter no less than into revenue and judicial matters in the course of his tours of inspection.



III

ECONOMIC CRISIS¹

ALLOW me to thank you very heartily for so cordially welcoming me to Bengal and to the high office to which I have been appointed. I have heard much of the community² which you represent,—of your devotion to your religious beliefs no less than of your assiduity in business and the success which is generally attendant thereon. I have, indeed, heard you referred to as the Scotsmen of the East, but I feel that it is hardly for me to attempt to estimate the value of the compliment thereby implied. I know that you form an important element in the commercial and industrial life of this city and province, and I am the more gratified to receive your good wishes and your offer of assistance towards the establishment of that better understanding which, as you rightly urge, is a necessary prelude to the success of the work now being carried on for the realisation of Parliament's aspirations for India and India's aspirations for herself.

I am well aware of, and I deeply deplore, the severe economic crisis through which Bengal, in common with the rest of the world, is at present passing. I believe also that under our existing financial settlement the task

¹ Reply to the Address presented by the Marwari Association, Calcutta, 9th April, 1932.

² Marwari—a non-Bengalee trading community.

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of the Ministers, and of others directly interested in the development of our provincial resources, has never been an easy one. You will not expect me, I hope, to produce any ready-made solutions to these difficulties, many of which contain factors which are quite beyond the control of any man or body of men in India. I am by instinct and training not a little shy of Government interference in matters of trade and commerce, but I feel that in Bengal there is a good deal that Government can do,—by way of experiment, research and example at all events,—to encourage the development of agriculture and farming, and perhaps also of the lesser industries. I can assure you that any comprehensive policy of development on these lines which my Ministers can evolve within the limits of our rather attenuated purse will have most sympathetic consideration at my hands. I realize also the blighting effect that provincial penury tends to exercise on the growth of those institutions of popular government which already exist, or are shortly to be developed in this province. Here, again, I can assure you that I shall spare no pains to see that our case for a more favourable financial settlement is pressed before those whose business it will be to deal with the matter. But, as I said in reply to an address of welcome the other day, we shall do well not to rely solely on a revision of the existing settlement for the rehabilitation of our provincial finances.

I must not attempt within the short compass of this reply to deal at length with your remarks on the relation between political unrest (arising out of the interaction of agitation and what it is customary to refer to as "repression") and commercial and economic depression. While fully accepting your opinion that trade and commerce cannot thrive in times of political ferment and



unrest, I am unable, I fear, to draw from this fact the conclusion to which your argument seems by implication to point,—that Government should content itself with what you term “conciliation,”—no matter how its overtures are received,—and take no stronger action to protect itself and the public. I welcome your strongly-worded condemnation of terrorism, but I would ask you in all seriousness to consider whether both as regards terrorism and that other menace to ordered Government, Civil Disobedience¹, it has not been proved time and again, and not in India alone, but as I believe, in every country where a similar situation has arisen, that the ordinary law is wholly inadequate to deal with such subversive movements. I would ask you, when you are considering what you have termed “repressive measures of great severity,” to put to yourselves one question,—which came first : The Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Emergency Powers Ordinance, or Terrorism and the attempt to revive the Civil Disobedience Movement? Surely the former were merely Government’s reply to the latter. They are, however, emphatically not the whole reply nor the sum total of Government’s policy with regard to India, and I can only add that no one will be happier than I when we can dispense with the help of the Ordinances and other special powers, and discharge our duties to the public by means of the ordinary law.

¹ A subversive and violent political agitation launched in 1930 by Mr. M. K. Gandhi with the object of wresting powers from the British Government in India. It professes to be non-violent in nature.



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ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION¹

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It will, I know, be the wish of everyone present that, before addressing myself to the business for which we are assembled, I should voice the congratulations and good wishes which we all desire to offer to the President of the Associated Chambers on the honour which it has pleased His Majesty the King Emperor to confer upon him. I shall not bring the blush to his cheek by recounting the services Sir Edward Benthall² has rendered to the European community,—and not to the European community only but to the cause of a better co-operation between communities in India. I will only say,—on your behalf, I am sure, as on my own,—that though this honour has come to him early in life, we look to him to regard it as an encouragement rather than as a reward, and we confidently count on him not to rest on his laurels, but to persevere in the course,—the not too easy course,—that he has set himself, over ground which he has made peculiarly his own.

I must thank you for the compliment you have paid me in asking me to open this Conference, and for the generous terms in which you have referred

¹ Speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Calcutta, 9th January, 1933.

² Senior partner of Messrs Bird & Co., and F. W. Heilgers & Co., two of the foremost business houses in India.



to me in conveying that invitation. While I appreciate the honour of the position in which I find myself to-day, I am also very conscious that your agenda touches on many topics covering a wide field, and that most of them, naturally enough, are matters of All-India concern. As a Provincial Governor I am neither in a position, nor am I free to deal fully with such matters. On the other hand, problems peculiar to this Province, and as such naturally uppermost in my mind, are not for the most part problems with which I could fittingly deal on this occasion, though there is much that might be said on the bearing of All-India policy upon the present condition of Bengal. To-day, however, I would just say this,—that the successful working of the new constitution in India as a whole, cannot be looked for unless adequate provision is made by and under that constitution for the special problems of particular provinces in such a manner as to ensure the healthy political and economic development of each of the constituent units of the Federation. 2 3

I share with the representatives of the Chambers the realisation of the number and gravity of the economic problems with which we are confronted, accentuated as they are by political uncertainty not only here, but throughout the world. The year that has passed has seen important changes in the situation affecting India, which—subject to world conditions—hold out some prospect of improvement in the trade position in the not distant future. I refer especially to the striking improvement in the political situation, and to the restoration in a very substantial degree of normal internal trading conditions after a period of organized interference dictated, at least, as much by political as by economic aims. I have in mind also the great cheapening of money 4



which should, as and when confidence is restored, play an important part in promoting commercial and industrial development.

The President has referred to the Ottawa Agreement¹ and to the significance of the recent decision of the Assembly. It would almost seem as though of recent years the nations of the world had turned their backs upon the hitherto accepted theory of international trade and had been bent upon depriving the world, by means of artificial barriers, of the benefits resulting to all from a pooling of national resources. The decision of India to enter voluntarily into an economic alliance with the rest of the Empire is certainly of profound significance.

6 In some quarters it has been urged, I know, that the Agreement will not benefit Indian trade, or that at any rate, as the President has indicated, it may not be possible to assess the advantages till a certain period of time has elapsed. The matter can at all events be tested very readily with regard to one commodity in which Bengal is interested,—I mean tea. If India had been excluded from preferential treatment accorded in the duty recently imposed by the United Kingdom, the consequences to the Indian tea industry would have been serious. She would have had to face competition on equal terms (so far as “duty” goes) from the Dutch East Indies, while our friends from Ceylon would have been left to rejoice alone in the possession of their two-penny preference!

7 The problem of constitutional reform must rightly occupy a large place in the minds of the commercial community. The old theory that the less commerce and politics were mixed up the better; certainly, for the former and possibly for both, has to be substantially

¹ An inter-Imperial Trade Agreement by the representatives of all the units of the British Empire concluded at Ottawa in 1932.



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modified. It is true that the influence of politics upon commerce, in the purely party sense, can hardly make for good, but in a modern state the functions of Government necessarily impinge more and more on the interests of trade and industry, and those who represent trade and industry, or who can speak for them, have a definite role to play in the sphere of government itself. It is of direct concern to you, as the President has reminded us, to see that the new constitution contains adequate provisions with respect to equality of treatment of commercial interests and to ensure the maintenance of the international credit upon which the interests not only of Government but of the trading community and of the people at large ultimately depend. I think you know that the importance of these considerations is fully appreciated by the authorities in England, and that the views of the people affected here in India have been fully and ably represented; I am confident that their representations will be given full weight. But in matters political, the commercial community is not concerned merely with the process of constitution-building. It has rightly claimed substantial representation in the new legislative bodies. The existence of the interests which justify such representation necessitates also that proper steps shall be taken to ensure that the representatives, when elected, will be men who can make a worthy contribution to the counsels of the State. In this matter the commercial community is confronted with a very real problem. A successful businessman is usually a very busy man. Firms do not send people out from home to devote themselves to politics,—nor do businessmen themselves come out here from Europe, or having come, remain here with leisure on their hands,—that leisure which active participation in public affairs



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demands. Yet arrangements will have to be made to ensure that men who are in daily touch with the business affairs of the country shall be free to give the time necessary to pull their weight in the Councils. The number of representatives, so far as one may judge, will be large in relation to the purely numerical strength of the community from which they must be drawn. They cannot all be of the first rank in the business world, but it will not do to have too many "sleeping partners." The representatives of commerce must be in a position to hold their own with dignity and to carry conviction in debate. This is a problem which some of you, I know, are considering ; it is a problem which, I am sure, you ought to set yourselves seriously to solve in good time. While I am on this topic, and at the risk of teaching other people their business, may I say that I think European firms would do well, from this and other points of view, to stimulate among their young men while they are yet young, an interest in and a study of Indian history and of the manners and customs of the people among whom their lot is cast ? It is a seed which, once sown, will nourish itself and fructify in those of them who are by nature able to profit by it. It is possible, I venture to remind you, to live and work in a great centre like Calcutta for many years and yet know little or nothing of India.

Apart, however, from any question of protecting the interests of commerce in the Councils, there are many problems towards the solution of which commercial representatives, perhaps more than any others, should be able to contribute by knowledge of affairs and business experience. Take unemployment for example. And when I speak of unemployment, I am thinking not only of the unemployment which is so acute at present, as the



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President reminded us, in the ranks of the European and Anglo-Indian communities, but of that great and pressing problem which, we in Bengal particularly have inherited as a legacy from a system of education which has partly outlived its usefulness,—the unemployment (I might even go so far as to call it “the unfitting for employment”) of the Indian middle classes,—those whom in this part of the world we call the *bhadralog*. This surely is a problem in the solution of which lies the cure for some at least of the ills from which the Indian world, political and social as well as economic, is suffering to-day. It is a problem upon which Commerce in the Councils might with advantage bring its peculiar talents and experience to bear. Then again, take an important matter like the development of the natural resources of the country, or the raising of the standards of life among the masses of the people. Much of the economic trouble from which the world is suffering to-day is due, I believe, to the fact that consuming capacity has not kept pace with productive capacity. We want help and co-operation over the widest field and the focussing of the best talent in the community upon these problems if they are to be solved.

There is ample scope and, indeed, the necessity for co-operation between Government and the representatives of commerce and industry in grappling with problems such as those to which I have referred. The form which such co-operation can best take seems to me a matter for serious consideration—and that at an early date. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce have recently submitted an interesting suggestion. They favour the early establishment of a standing consultative body, and they would entrust that body in the first instance with the task of making a general survey of the position in

this Province with a view to fixing some broad basis for future policy. There is, indeed, as the Chamber point out, a store of material for such a survey ready to hand in the reports of various Committees that have deliberated since the War, and whose reports have for one reason or another been pigeon-holed. The Chamber favour the creation of a small body of an expert rather than of a representative character. The desirability of bringing a wider range of experience to bear on the problems of Government in the economic sphere and of imparting greater flexibility to the machinery of Government in that connexion has already been widely recognized. Sir Arthur Salter¹ two years ago made an interesting and valuable report in which he brought the experience gathered in various European countries to bear upon the problem in India. His provisional conclusions were in favour of a plan differing in some respects from that now put forward by the Chamber of Commerce. He was, of course, dealing with India as a whole, and he contemplated the establishment of both Provincial and Central Committees suitably linked together. Where his conception differed from that of the Chamber was that he favoured large Committees of a fully representative character which would serve to range public opinion on the side of Government rather than small expert bodies whose main utility would be in the special knowledge that its members brought to the service of the State. He did not, moreover, contemplate that any action would be taken until the reformed constitution had come, or was about to come into operation. I am not in a position to express any final opinion upon

¹ Sir James Arthur Salter, K. C. B. Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions, Oxford University since 1934; Member of Economic Advisory Council since 1932; Missions to India 1930.



the matter, but it seems to me pretty clear that if action is to be taken now—and I am impressed by the strength of the case for early action—it must, if only for practical reasons, be on the lines suggested by the Chamber rather than those advocated by Sir Arthur Salter, with this qualification, however, that any Committee set up, while composed of persons chosen primarily on account of their special knowledge and experience, must also be in a broad sense representative. There must be no question of racial discrimination. The European element is both important and powerful in the commerce and industry of this province, but the less it is treated, or regards itself, as in a water-tight compartment the better. I have of late been delighted to see various indications of a broadening of the basis of co-operation. The President has referred to the Employers Federation now being organized. We have also the Committee recently set up under an Indian Chairman to consider the problems connected with the “futures” market in jute. These are healthy developments which promise well for the future.



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IT was in November 1933 that I announced on behalf of Government their decision to make a determined effort to improve the economic condition of the Province. In pursuance of that decision a new department has been instituted under a Rural Development Commissioner with the necessary staff, and a Board of Economic Enquiry has been set up. The first fruits of that policy are now available. They include the scheme of voluntary restriction of jute cultivation. It will be remembered that the Jute Enquiry Committee, which was a very representative body of officials and non-officials, recommended unanimously that, in default of a scheme of compulsory restriction which was held to be impracticable, vigorous measures should be taken to bring about restriction by voluntary action.

Public opinion throughout the Province gave strong support to the recommendation. After careful examination of the obvious practical difficulties and consultation with experienced District Officers, a plan was formulated and has been put into vigorous action—with what result it remains to be seen. I will only say that at present the indications are entirely favourable, and one thing is certain that the effort that is being made will stand

¹ Portion of the Bengal Legislative Council Speech.
11th Feb. 1935.



out as the most conspicuous example of co-operative mass action the Province has ever seen. The manner in which official and non-official agencies throughout the jute-growing districts of the Province have collaborated in giving effect to the policy of Government is worthy of the highest praise. Apart from the immediate object to be served, the stimulus given in connection with this campaign to the cultivation of alternative crops is likely to prove of lasting value.

Another subject which has received very close attention is the condition of those parts of Bengal (estimated at some 25,000 square miles) which are generally known as the "decadent areas". In these areas, owing to the inadequacy or uneven distribution of the annual rainfall, or owing to changes in the regime of the rivers, there is agricultural deterioration which threatens to be progressive, associated with malaria of the worst type which threatens to spread still further. The conditions in some of the districts in the west and centre of Bengal are deplorable, and their repercussions on the life of the Province exceedingly grave. For years the Bengalee people have been suffering the misery of hope deferred. There has been no large scale constructive activity in Bengal, no forward movement such as inspired the short-lived province of Eastern Bengal and such as inspires certain other provinces to this day. The energy of Bengal has been diverted into sterile criticism or Utopian dreams, and concrete schemes for progress on a large scale have not been regarded as possibilities. The solution of the problem of the decadent areas has been known for years and it was pointed out by Dr. Bentley.¹

¹ Charles Albert Bentley, C.I.E., Commandant of the Order of the Nile, 1937 ; Emeritus Prof. of Hygiene in the Egyptian University ; late Director of Public Health with the Government of Bengal.



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Irrigation with silt water will restore agricultural prosperity and will banish malaria. If we can "restore our dead rivers," the decadent areas will be as fruitful and as healthy as those in Eastern Bengal which are flushed by the rivers in flood. But all efforts to apply that solution in a practical form have so far failed. The great obstacle has been finance, and it is only through a revolution in the method of financing irrigation in this province that it will be possible to give effect to Dr. Bentley's formula and to restore prosperity to these decadent areas. It is during a period of depression that great public works can best be started. It is then that money, material, and labour are cheapest : but it is then that financial departments everywhere scrutinize most jealously schemes for development. Unless the schemes put forward promise not only to pay for themselves but to leave a safe margin of profit, they cannot be taken up by any Government which has not a handsome surplus. It is this problem that it is hoped to solve by means of a Bill which aims at giving Government an adequate but not unreasonable share of the profit or unearned increment which may accrue from schemes carried out at Government expense, at supplementing the existing powers which govern the construction of improvement works, at the same time securing for the cultivator, or other person who has sufficient initiative to take full advantage of the improvement works, his fair share of the profits from the improvement. The Bill aims not at a mere redistribution of existing wealth, but at the creation of new wealth and a new departure. Such a new departure cannot possibly be combined with adherence to old methods ; it is probable therefore that some of the clauses in the Bill may be considered by some



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persons to go too far. But large changes cannot be made without large powers, and to me the Bill appears to offer the best, if not the only hope for the regeneration of the decadent areas of Bengal.

The development of road communications is assuming greater practical importance as the sums available from the proceeds of the Motor Vehicles Tax and from the Central Road Fund increase. In order to ensure the most effective use of the available resources, steps have recently been taken for the preparation of a comprehensive programme of road and bridge construction to be framed with regard to the claims of the various classes of traffic, to the marketing of the products of rural industries and agriculture, and to the necessity for co-ordination with existing means of communication. The existence of such a programme will be the best safeguard against haphazard development, and has become a matter of urgency in view of the fact that the amount available for expenditure during the current quinquennium may be well in excess of a crore of rupees.

When I last addressed the Council, I referred to the experiment in the treatment of malaria which was being undertaken with the new drug plasmochin in combination with quinine. The experiment has been in operation for two years and I am informed that the incidence of malaria in the area selected for the experiment has decreased by at least 50 per cent. So far the indications are favourable, and the further statistics to be collected during the current year should enable Government to pronounce definitely upon the results of the experiment.

My Government have also been considering means of promoting the extended use of quinine throughout the Province, and I hope that they may be in a position to announce before the close of the session certain



decisions which will have an important bearing on this problem.

In the sphere of education, while financial stringency must for the present stand in the way of any large development, there are certain important questions not involving expense which have been engaging the close attention of the Hon'ble Minister. These questions include a greater insistence on moral instruction, the systematic organisation of the pupils' leisure, a more personal interest in the development of individual character and the introduction into the ordinary curriculum of features designed to encourage a leaning towards agricultural and industrial pursuits. I feel sure that the co-operation of the Universities and the support of public opinion may be counted upon in the development of these aspects of the educational system.

No review of the constructive side of Government policy which left out of account the problem of unemployment would be complete a stark and hideous feature of the present situation. In my opinion—and I have given much thought to the matter—this problem is not likely to yield to methods of direct frontal attack. By educational reforms, by the encouragement of village industries, by such measures as the State Aid to Industries Act, a substantial alleviation of the situation may no doubt be brought about, and the more we can do in that direction the better will the classes we desire to help be fitted to take advantage of economic revival when it comes. But for a radical cure we must look further afield—to the general improvement of rural economy, which will increase the spending power of the masses and so enlarge the scope for employment, and to an improvement in the financial condition of Government itself and of the other public authorities of the Province, so that



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services, whose development is now suspended in consequence of lack of funds, may again forge ahead. In the services connected with education, public health and the co-operative movement alone, there would be enormous scope for employment if the necessary funds were available. It is for this reason, among others, that Government have of late laid so much stress on the importance of economic development, and of securing an equitable readjustment of provincial finance.

In the latter connection I must refer briefly to the position we have now reached in the struggle to secure financial justice. We are assured, as from the date from which the contemplated new constitutional arrangements will operate, of a grant equivalent to half the nett proceeds of the jute export duty. But our claim, as the House is aware, goes far beyond that and the final adjudication upon our claim, which we have no intention of abating, has still to come. We are told that there will be an enquiry by disinterested persons before the final settlement is made. At the time of that enquiry our full case will have to be stated publicly, which has never yet been done, together with all the arguments by which we seek to support our claim. Other Provinces and the Central authority whose interests naturally conflict with ours to some extent, will of course be entitled to put their point of view and we have no desire to steal a march on them. We rely entirely on the merits of our case. In my judgment they are very strong, and I know that the whole Province stands united behind Government in this matter. What is important is that we should be in a position to present our case in the best possible light. We must not leave it open to any interested critic to say that our difficulties are of our own making or that we could have found a way of escape for

ourselves had we been so minded. I must not anticipate anything that the Hon'ble Finance Member may have to say when he presents certain taxation proposals to you. He will explain to you why, in the opinion of Government, these proposals are necessary in order to satisfy the condition attached by the Government of India and the Assembly to the grant of certain temporary relief to Bengal pending the determination of financial relations under the proposed new constitution. I will only say that little as I like proposals for increased taxation of any description in times like these, I am satisfied that the adoption of the present proposals, which have been most carefully designed to avoid adding to the burdens laid upon the poorest members of the community, will not only satisfy the condition to which I have referred, while at the same time bringing in a welcome addition of revenue, but will strengthen the moral position of the Province when our claim to financial justice comes to the final test. I trust that in the circumstances you may find it possible to accept without substantial alteration the proposals which shall be laid before you.

I have so far reviewed the main features of the policy of my Government in, I hope, such a way as to make clear to you how they combine to form a consistent and balanced plan designed to overcome, in the course of time, the various mischiefs from which we suffer, and to promote the permanent well-being of the Province. It now only remains for me to address you briefly on the subject of the scheme of constitutional reform now before Parliament.

That scheme was discussed in this Council last December in a debate which extended over four days. I have studied the report of the speeches then delivered



by representatives from all quarters of the House. I have been glad to find a very general recognition both of the unexampled complexity of the task to which the Joint Select Committee had to address themselves and of the great skill, patience and thoroughness with which the scheme recommended by them has been worked out. On the whole the debate disclosed a welcome readiness to work the reformed scheme in that spirit of goodwill without which the full benefits of the best conceived plan cannot be obtained. On many points there was naturally a sharp difference of opinion. Upon the communal award and its rider, the Poona Pact,¹ I am not in a position to speak. A point of criticism, however, on which there was practical unanimity was the omission of any specific reference to Dominion Status as the goal of India's advance. I confess to considerable sympathy with the feeling so widely expressed on this point. Possibly the explanation of the omission is to be found in the fact that the term Dominion Status is not a juridical conception at all and would, therefore, be out of place in the body of any statute. The attributes of Dominion Status have never been precisely defined, and indeed seem to me incapable of precise legal definition. The Dominions of the Crown ceased to be Colonies and acquired that more resounding appellation long before they had reached their present stage of constitutional evolution. I trust, however, that all misgivings on this point have been set at rest by the statement made by Mr. Baldwin some little time ago and by the more recent pronouncement of the Secretary of State.

¹ Poona Pact—25th Sept, 1932—was introduced by Mr. Gandhi's threat to "fast unto death" as a basis for composition of provincial Legislatures under the Govt. of India Act 1935. This has created a lasting cleavage between the different castes in the great Hindu community of India.

It may be worth while to quote what Sir Samuel Hoare said in the House of Commons on Wednesday last. "Government," he said "stand firmly by the pledge contained in the 1919 preamble, which it is not a part of their plan to repeal, and by the interpretation put by the Viceroy in 1929 on the authority of the Government of the day on that preamble, that the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status."

Coming now to the vexed question of safeguards and the Governor's special powers, the impression which I derive from your debates is that while the necessity for some special provisions of this nature is generally accepted, the actual proposals in the Report are regarded in many quarters as going much too far. As one on whom the heavy responsibilities of a Governor are laid I should be tempted to agree with that view if I thought that the application of those safeguards and the exercise of those powers was likely to be a normal feature of the day to day administration of the Province. But I do not take that view. Special powers are appropriate to special circumstances. If the proposed provisions are analyzed it will be found that they have a threefold origin. Some are required for the protection of the interests of minorities. Others mark the fact that India is now to be advanced along the road to full responsible Government up to a point at which the distribution of responsibility between the representative of the Sovereign and his Ministers corresponds to what obtained in Great Britain and the Dominions at a stage in their constitutional evolution which, though comparatively recent, has now been passed. This surely was inevitable. Parliamentary Government, if it is to become a reality and not to serve as a mere screen



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behind which some other form of Government, oligarchical or autocratic, will operate, can only be attained by stages. In England the process occupied some hundreds of years. A parliamentary attitude of mind has to be developed in the people. The masses in India who have been bred in a tradition of autocratic government have not only much to learn but they have also much to unlearn. A mountain top can never be reached in one stride. The remaining safeguards, such as those relating to the security of the services and the protection of sources of secret information, embody to a large extent the substance of conventions which are well recognized in England and have there become as firmly established as if they were enshrined in the statute law.

With the problem of finance I have already dealt. I have never made any secret of my view that without adequate financial provision any scheme of provincial autonomy must fail and fail disastrously. On that point your debates disclosed complete unanimity. The Hon'ble Finance Member has informed you that so far as he can see there is nothing in the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee which will prevent full justice being done to Bengal's claim. I agree with his view and I have full confidence that such will be the outcome.

It is not possible for me to refer in detail to other features of the proposed scheme, many of which are of less immediate concern to a Provincial Legislature. I would only conclude by expressing my personal conviction that in a matter so beset by difficulties here and elsewhere, no further or more prolonged effort through whatsoever agency would be likely to result in a plan of constitutional advance better tuned to the realities of the situation or better calculated to bring about in the course of



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time, and with the goodwill of those upon whom in varying degrees the responsibility for its execution will be laid, the consummation of the hopes of those who have the well-being of the people of this great country genuinely at heart.



VI

RESTRICTION¹

ANOTHER topic to which you have given a prominent place is the economic condition of the people—and this is apt to be synonymous with the state of the raw jute trade. I realize and enter fully into your anxieties on this score. As you are aware, Government submitted the problem of jute in all its aspects to a representative committee presided over by Mr. Finlow, late Director of Agriculture. The Committee made a valuable Report but were divided in opinion on the very important question of the regulation of output as a means of improving the price level of the raw product. That question will have to be decided by Government, and in this connection the investigation now being carried out under the auspices of the recently established Board of Economic Enquiry into the economic condition of cultivators in various parts of the Province may be expected to have an important bearing. We hope that the results of that investigation may be available within the next few weeks, and I can assure you that Government will use every endeavour to formulate their conclusions with the least possible delay. I must, however, utter a word of warning. I have seen suggestions that Government should

¹ Reply to the addresses presented at :—
Comilla, 24-7-34.
Rangpur, 31-10-36.
Dinajpur, 3-2-36.



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apply to jute, measures modelled upon those adopted in certain other parts of India in the case of sugar-cane. But on close examination I think one is forced to the conclusion that there is really very little analogy for this purpose between a product which cannot be stored or carried for long distances without suffering serious deterioration, and which therefore seeks a local market in which it can be immediately consumed, and one which on the other hand finds its way, as raw jute does, through devious channels to markets all over the world, and of which a large surplus is always carried forward from year to year in the hands of middlemen. The problem of jute is much more complicated, but it has now become a matter for serious and urgent consideration whether reliance can continue to be placed to the same extent as in the past on measures of voluntary restriction stimulated by propaganda of the nature with which you are familiar. There are many who think that more effective means must be devised of bringing the supply of jute into equilibrium with the probable demand. This is one of a number of problems to which Government are addressing themselves with the aid of the machinery for Economic Reconstruction which they have recently set up.

Jute is the key to many of your economic problems, whether you be landlords whose income has shrunk so seriously during the last six years, or whether your interests are bound up with the problem of employment either in Government service or through the avenue of vocational training, or with matters of detail such as the incidence of taxation on tobacco—which is not I believe a matter of very serious importance. In so far as the price of jute affects fundamentally your common welfare, my Government



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claim, and I believe with reason, that the measures that they have taken with regard to jute have made a substantial contribution to your interests—and I believe, as substantial a contribution as could possibly be made having regard to the disastrous fall in world prices as a whole. It is impossible to hope that so long as world prices remain so much below the level of a few years ago, the price of jute alone can rise to its old time figure. But from a careful study of the course of the prices of this commodity during the last three years I am personally convinced that the policy of voluntary restriction so far undertaken has, in spite of disturbing factors, maintained the prices of jute at a general level substantially higher than they would have attained had that policy not been undertaken. It is for this reason that upon a most exhaustive consideration of the agricultural and commercial position my Government have decided to continue the policy of restriction next year. It will be their object to produce, as compared with the year 1934, the same reduction in area, namely three annas, as has in fact been brought about in the current year. I would impress upon all of you the fundamental importance of this policy in bearing upon many of the problems that you have raised.

The adverse weather conditions which prevailed during the last season in Dinajpur affected both the acreage and outturn of the jute crop. The outturn, however, did not compare unfavourably with that of 1934, being 83·43 per cent as against 89·14.

Moreover, it is apt to be overlooked that by the restriction of jute a great impetus was given to the cultivation of sugar-cane as an alternative crop. There has been a remarkable increase in the acreage under that crop—from less than 38,000 to 47,000 acres—an

increase which has, I hope, been a source of profit and remuneration to the cultivators.

I must, however, emphasize the fact that the underlying object of Jute Restriction is to restore a healthy price level by bringing the surplus stocks of jute back to normal and avoiding a glut on the market. A reasonable balance between demand and supply is essential in the best interests of the ryot¹ and the landlord alike ; and it would, I know, be disastrous if in the hope of immediate profits the cultivator failed to restrict to the full extent in the coming season. I hope that the Landholders' Association will lend their full support to bring about the required reduction in the acreage under jute this year.

The suggestion of fixing a minimum price for jute was, after thorough discussion and most careful consideration, discarded as being impracticable. The analogy of sugarcane does not hold good owing to the wide difference in the conditions which apply to the jute and sugar industries respectively.

¹ A tenant—a cultivator of the soil.



VII

ORGANISATIONS¹

IT gives me very genuine pleasure to be your guest on this occasion and to be able to propose the toast of the Calcutta Trades Association.²

Let me say at once that I have no intention of making a political speech or delivering myself of anything in the nature of a pronouncement, momentous or otherwise. I have seen it suggested—in reference to some occasion on which I ventured to sound an optimistic note—that I only did so to conceal the fact that neither my Government nor I were able to find any remedy for the prevailing disease of depression. In consequence, it was hinted, we had fallen back on the old device of telling the patient that he was getting better in the hope that if we repeated the assurance frequently enough, he would begin to believe it.

I am not a student of the bedside manner and have never aspired to distinction either as a doctor or a wizard. Moreover, I would be the last to claim that the Government of a Province by its own efforts could bring about that general revival of prosperity upon which the interests of your members must ultimately depend. But

¹ Speech at the Calcutta Trades Association Dinner, 20th Feb. 1936.

² Founded on 12th June, 1830, on a recommendation from the Hon'ble Sir Charles Edward Grey, then Chief Justice of Bengal.

I cannot refrain from chronicling the undeniable fact that for the first time for five years your Association has found itself in a position to hold this annual gathering and to provide its guests—among whom I am happy to number myself—with a good dinner and a very pleasant evening.

I seem to remember reading that in the good old days the Europeans of Calcutta were in the habit of meeting at the beginning of the cold weather for the purpose of congratulating each other on their survival. A practice of meeting at the end of each cold weather for a similar purpose of mutual congratulation seems to me, after experience of four Christmas seasons, at least equally appropriate, and I am glad you have decided against letting the practice fall permanently into disuse.

Whether the revival of this annual function is just another instance of self-hypnotism or whether it betokens a real and justifiable feeling of optimism on the part of those of you who have weathered the storm, I leave to your Master to tell us. That the last years have been hard ones few know better than yourselves. Your trade is subject to varied influences,—some world-wide, others to some extent under the control of the Government of India; while in matters of more local concern you are vitally interested in the conduct of affairs by the Government of this Province and by the civic administration of Calcutta. The price of jute or tea, the demand for timber, the incidence of freights and tariffs, the prosperity of the professional, commercial and landowning classes on the one hand concern you as directly as do the cost of your electricity, the incidence of city rates or the facilities of civic life on the other. Your interests are bound up with the prosperity of India and this Province, and you do well to



recognize that it is not sufficient in these days to wrap yourselves up entirely in the internal affairs of your own businesses. The times demand that you should provide from among your ranks men who are willing and able to devote a part of their energies and abilities to the study of problems that concern you all, and to an active and broadminded guardianship of your wider interests.

It is not an accident that yours is the oldest public body in this city. The historian and the novelist have written much of the soldiers and the merchant princes in the early days of Calcutta—but it was your predecessors who provided for this then far distant settlement, the amenities of western civilisation and helped to build up Calcutta as a second metropolis in the East. If the history of your Association could be written it would, I believe, reveal how much the trades of Calcutta have contributed both to the development of civic amenities and to the organisation of civic life. I gladly recognize that you still number among your members men who handsomely maintain that tradition of the past.

The past and present generations have witnessed great changes in the conditions of retail trading. While some of the old established specialist firms have survived and expanded, the smaller specialist has tended to be crowded out. In the large cities of the world the master craftsman who supervised both the making and the selling of his own wares is fast disappearing—too fast perhaps for those who still have an old fashioned liking for leisurely dealing and an element of personal quality in their purchases. Yet one cannot but admire the manner in which the large enterprises, that have taken the place of the old style retailer, have striven to serve the needs of the public. In England and perhaps

in India, there have been in existence for many years, establishments where under the same roof you can buy anything from a tiepin to a rhinoceros. Yet personally speaking, I have never once heard of a case where a man who wanted a rhinoceros found himself obliged to negotiate the purchase with a lifelong specialist in tiepins. Things like this only show how much can be accomplished by organisation.

Seriously, however, in spite of mass production and in spite of the growing complexity of retail trade, I believe it is true that a great value still attaches to individual quality and the personal touch. I suppose it must be that people have a deep-rooted feeling that they like to know what they are buying—they also like to feel that the retailer knows what he is selling and is a real and personal link between the purchaser and the producer. But whatever the cause, I believe that in the long run the trader who not only sells his goods, but takes a pride in them, should earn his reward.

Nor, I hope, will mass production ever succeed in killing the demand for quality. People may buy things that, but for mass production, would never have come within their reach—but sooner or later some of them will begin to want something more than a mere article—they will want a better article—something into which a little more care and human effort have been embodied. If this be true then those of you who pride yourselves upon quality may do well to keep up the standard, and may in due course reap the harvest from a demand created and expanded by production and marketing in quantity.

But please do not think that I want to venture on anything in the nature of suggestions as to the manner in which you should conduct your own affairs, I leave that



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to the far more capable hands of a section of the community that is not represented here to-night—I mean the Ladies. For many of you, theirs and not mine is the criticism that counts—and never forget that much of it is heard in secret places. Like many other men I have never dared to enquire what it is that the ladies talk about at that intimate hour when the ladies leave the table—but I have heard that among all their topics of conversation there is none more engrossing or more momentous in its consequences than that which turns on the manifold virtues—and if I must say it—the occasional deficiencies of the shops of Calcutta.

I promised that I would say nothing of particular importance and I believe I have kept my promise. I only wish to conclude by wishing you prosperity in the year to come and asking you to join me in the toast of the Calcutta Trades Association.



VIII BANKING¹

FAR be it from me in this company to tempt you into the deep waters of the history and theory of banking. I would rather confine myself to an expression of my pleasure at being present here to-day, on this occasion that celebrates a period of twenty-five years' enterprise crowned with success in the development of an Indian Bank on modern principles.

Yet bankers alone cannot make a successful banking system. It needs at least two categories of people as well—the people who put their money in, and the people with whom the banker can place that money, not only with profit but also with the assurance that he will get it back when he needs it—for, to convert an old phrase, the banker must always be in the position of having at hand enough of Peter's money to satisfy the demands of Paul. That, however, is the banker's business and I am digressing.

I have referred to two classes of people apart from the banker. Between these two classes,—the depositor representing the results of success and the borrower representing the potentialities of enterprise—the banker is the bridge. Upon the confidence that he can inspire in the one class and the soundness of his judgment

¹ Speech at the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Central Bank of India, Ltd., 12th January, 1937.



in appraising the merits of the other, the capacity and strength of that bridge depend.

But though the banker may build the bridge and provide the facilities, the extent to which those facilities can be exploited must depend on the character of the people themselves and their progressive education in the meaning and uses of banking.

There is another function of certain banks—namely, the creation of credit to give impetus to enterprise and to set in motion those great reserves of power that lie dormant in the unused energies of a people and the undeveloped reserves of their country. In my own country of Scotland, it is an accepted fact that the practical initiative of the banks a century and a half ago did enable great and lasting developments to be brought about in the industry and prosperity of the country. But, if I may say so with all the modesty that becomes a Scotsman, banks alone could not have effected that progress had it not been for the great natural resources latent in the country itself and in the character of its people.

Here, however, I must restrain myself. In venturing on the subject of the creation of credit we are getting beyond the realm of joint stock banking and approaching those deep waters that it is my intention on this occasion to avoid.

Let me merely say this that in providing every facility for the depositor and encouraging both enterprise and responsibility on the part of the borrower, a bank in close touch with the people of India may render great and lasting service in the exploitation, for the people's benefit, of their vast and too often latent potentialities.

In wishing the Central Bank a long and successful career in the new regime of banking in India I trust it



ECONOMICS

CSL

may serve not only as a proof of what Indian bankers can do, but also as a means of stimulating among those who come within its sphere of influence those qualities of confidence, enterprise and responsibility upon which alone the successful growth of banking institutions must depend.

IX

COMMUNICATIONS¹

IT is a great pleasure to me to see this handsome bridge completed and to take part in its opening. If I was not here at its beginnings, I have, at all events, watched it grow from comparative infancy—I can claim to have crawled across it when there was only an arch of lattice work and no road-way—to its present stature and condition. I had nearly said “to maturity,” but I believe it would be wrong of me to describe the present state of the bridge as such for I am told that good concrete goes on getting stronger and stronger for at least the first hundred years of its existence and I do not think, therefore, that any of us here to-day need worry ourselves regarding what this bridge will be like when it reaches maturity, let alone a ripe old age.

To anyone having the least acquaintance with the vagaries of mountain streams and Himalayan hillsides, there would occur a strong suspicion that in a project of this kind engineering difficulties would be apt to crop up at every stage. But looking now at the bridge and its surroundings I feel there was a danger lest, after all, the masterly simplicity of the design, and the success with which it has been carried out, might have blinded us to the existence of difficulties which have been so resolutely

¹ Speech at the opening of the Teesta Bridge, named the “Anderson Bridge,” 26th October, 1933.

and ingeniously overcome. In fact, of course, the whole progress of construction bristled with problems of a specialized nature calling for close and constant supervision and a very high degree of technical resourcefulness, for at a site like this things are apt to happen quickly and situations develop that must be controlled immediately if they themselves are not to take control. There again, I think I can claim to have had some personal experience, for it so happens that in September of last year, when I came this way on a visit to Kalimpong and was taking stock of the progress of the bridge, my car—to the horror of my Military Secretary¹—was parked under a beetling crag which looked as though it might come down at any moment. And in fact it came down, with quite a lot of the hill-side, very shortly after I had left for Kalimpong, and deposited itself on the very place where my car had just previously been standing.

The first Teesta Bridge of which we have any record is that described by "A Lady Pioneer" who visited Kalimpong from Darjeeling and wrote a book about it in 1875. She says "although flowing with its usual speed, the Teesta is deeper and less turbulent here, whilst the marvellous bridge spanning it, 300 feet long, is composed solely of rattan cane, without the aid of a single nail or piece of rope from beginning to end." She observed that the Police did not permit persons carrying heavy loads to cross the bridge, and added that "for these a small bamboo raft is used, which looks if possible more fragile and dangerous still." At that time there was no proper road from Jorebungalow to this place, and no road at all in the Teesta Valley either upstream to Rungpo or downstream to Siliguri.

¹ Colonel R. B. Butler, C.I.E., C.B.E., M.C., Military Secretary to Sir John Anderson, 1932-37.



There was only a rough track to Kalimpong, and any trade there may have been with Tibet—yak-tails and perhaps wool—must have come in by that track if it did not go through Bhutan, the route by which the first British visitors to Tibet had travelled.

It was in such circumstances that the old bridge upon which we now look down was constructed—after a good many estimates and false starts—between 1879 and 1881. When you remember that all the material had to be brought from rail-head, then at Kurseong, up to Ghoom and then by a rough bridle track down to this place, you will admit, I am sure, that the engineers of those days made a very good job of it under difficult conditions. I should like to have seen the two-inch cables which support that bridge, each of them 465 ft. in length, being carried down, stretched to their full length, by 60 coolies. Cables are tricky things to handle and I expect they had some fun going round the numerous corners of the path. It is over 52 years since the old bridge was constructed, at an estimated cost of under two lakhs, and I do not think it can be said that the bridge owes the Province much now.

Traffic conditions have altered much since 1876 when the old bridge was first projected and when the Lieutenant-Governor¹ of the day expressed the opinion that a simple suspension bridge, which would pass one or two laden ponies at a time, would meet all the requirements of the situation. In 1876 the tract which we now know as the Kalimpong subdivision had formed part of British India for about ten years only, and the potentialities of trade with Bhutan and Tibet through Kalimpong had not become apparent. Since the early days of the present

¹ Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Temple, Bart., M.P., G.C.S.I., C.I.E., L.L.D., D.C.L., F.R.S., 1874-77.

century the opening of the Jelap-la route, the bringing of the rail-head to what used to be called "Kalimpong Road Station," and the construction of good roads, now available for motors, to Gangtok and Kalimpong, have opened up a brisk, if fluctuating trade in wool, oranges and general merchandise. The development of roads suitable for light motor cars both in Darjeeling and Sikkim has been rapid during the past few years. The opening of the Kalimpong Development Area in 1921 has also tended to increase the traffic on this road, and once the Sevok Jhora is bridged we may, I hope, see Kalimpong become considerably more popular as a residential area with a resulting increase in motor traffic.

Partly to carry this increased traffic and partly in the confident hope of a growing volume of trade in the future, Government considered it worth their while,—when the time came to replace the existing bridge,—to launch out on a more ambitious scale and to give to this important trade route a suitable connecting link over the Teesta and to this beautiful valley a structure worthy of its natural charm. I think it may fairly be claimed that both objects are fully served by the fine bridge which I am to have the pleasure of opening to-day. Such a bridge is a credit to designer and builder alike.

The bridge as we see it may be regarded as complete. It will certainly suffice for the purpose which it was designed to meet. There can, however, be no doubt that the beauty of the scheme as a whole will be greatly enhanced when the plans with regard to the treatment of the approaches and of the old bridge towers can be carried into effect. In the meantime you will have observed that something has already been done to placate the *genius loci* and to attune this modern and



essentially Western conception to the outlook of those whose requirements it is principally designed to serve. His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim, whom we see all too rarely in Bengal and whom, with Her Highness, we are delighted to welcome here to-day, will not have failed to note that on its North aspect the Bridge looks through the mask of the great God Kanchenjunga¹ toward the Eternal Snows of Sikkim, while on its southern aspect is placed the mask of the Guardian Spirit of Sevoke. And no follower of the religion of the Lord Buddha will, I am certain, cross the bridge without observing the auspicious presence of the eight Glorious Emblems.

Finally, it is a matter of no little gratification to me that my name is to be connected with this useful and elegant structure. In the hope that it may long fulfil the objects for which it has been erected, I now declare the "Anderson Bridge" open.

It is not my intention to add to or elaborate in detail² the full and able exposition which we have heard concerning the nature and purposes of this bridge to be. Considered by itself it is a great undertaking—the longest purely road bridge in the province, conceived on modern lines and designed to open up communication with the Grand Trunk Road³ for a large and hitherto inaccessible part of Bengal. In assessing its ultimate value, however,

¹ Second highest peak of the great Himalayan range having an elevation of 28,156 ft. above sea level. In Sanskrit literature the Himalayas have been described as Divine.

² Speech on the occasion of laying the Foundation Stone of the Anderson Bridge over the Damodar, Burdwan, 25th Feb., 1937.

³ A direct road covering 1514 miles between Calcutta and Peshawar constructed by Sher Shah, in the 16th Century A.D.

we must look further even than that, and if the progress to which we look forward is maintained, some of those who are now here may live to see a sign post on the Grand Trunk Road pointing one way to Peshawar and, in the direction of this bridge, to Madras and Bombay. I make no definite prophecies because I know full well how long the best laid plans may take to come to fulfilment. I am reminded of a long chain of predecessors in office, more than one of whom had hoped to drive over the new Howrah Bridge before his term of office came to an end ; yet this bridge, like the Howrah Bridge, is now definitely under way. It has been designed, the site has been settled and the money is there to pay for it. What remains is for the engineers to undertake their task—a task which will not be without its problems but in which we feel confident that their skill and determination will bring them to success.

We know that progress is slow, but we may be permitted to hope that in the matter of road development we have now reached a stage when progress may be steady and sure. Less than ten years ago, I am told, an adventurous and enthusiastic motorist undertook the journey from Calcutta to Burdwan in a Rolls Royce car and completed it there and back in a day. In the then state of the road this feat was reported as a striking testimony to the car and as a feat which nothing short of a Rolls Royce could have accomplished without very serious discomfort. The report stated, if my informant's memory is correct, that it was simply incredible that the wheels of a motor car could perform such acrobatics while the body kept on an even keel. Those of you who have done the journey now-a-days, without a Rolls Royce and without being visibly the worse for it, can bear witness to the fact that there has been some

progress already. But in the matter of road communications as a whole, looked at from the point of view both of the province and India, we are only at the beginning, and what I would like to emphasize is that the building of this bridge is not an isolated project, but one of the first fruits of long study leading up to a carefully planned and comprehensive scheme embodying the main lines of road development for the province.

You have heard that the expenditure upon this bridge—heavy though it is—will not starve the rest of Bengal of capital projects, as we are empowered to raise a loan for the funds required. The loan will be secured of course on our provincial revenues, but will be paid off, while the Road Fund lasts, by appropriations of a portion of our share in that Fund. I am now in a position to add, and this is of special interest in view of the proceedings of the Indian Road and Transport Development Association, Ltd., that in addition to this loan we are (subject to the consent of the Central Standing Committee) authorized to raise loans to the extent of a further 47 lakhs for the financing of approved capital projects of road development in other parts of the province. We may therefore claim—I speak still as the Head of the existing administration—that we have placed our successors in a position to make a good start, and they will find plans based on the most careful investigations awaiting their decision.

In the matter of road policy we have proceeded, as I believe we were entitled to proceed, on the assumption that while the rate of progress must be determined by the funds that are in hand or can be judiciously raised, the work of road development is one which requires continuity. We have further assumed that provided the general scheme is well conceived, it will in the public

interest be allowed to stand, irrespective of the political vicissitudes of this or that government. The future will show whether our assumptions are warranted, but it will not in my opinion affect the validity of those assumptions from the standpoint of the public interest.

8 While I am speaking of continuity, may I say that in the instance of this bridge we are implementing a policy of our predecessors five centuries ago, though with a different intention. It was, according to tradition, the Subadars of Bengal who had their seat of government at Pandua or Gour in the fifteenth century, who first constructed the road from Midnapore, through Burdwan to Rajmahal. It was, we are told, an embanked one, seventy-five yards in width, planted with trees and aligned in perfectly straight sections from one natural feature of the countryside to another.

9 We cannot, with our resources, aim at a road of such width and grandeur. But what we can do, and what we are now about to begin, is to build a bridge on the line approximately of that old road which the builders of the road could never have contemplated.

10 The motor-car, after the long lapse of centuries, has brought back at once the utility and the romance of these old communications, and in this ceremony we are inaugurating a link in one of those old routes along which the commerce and the pageantry of bygone ages used to move. I join with you all in the hope that this link may be of real service in removing the handicap so long felt by the population south of the Damodar, owing to the lack of those easier and more rapid means of communication that the march of progress has bestowed on their more fortunate brethren to the north.

I have already said that this bridge is designed to form a link in the future with trunk roads stretching



away to Madras in the south, and to Bombay in the west ; yet it is not only of Bombay and Madras that we are thinking to-day as we set our hands to the building of this bridge. We are thinking, in the more immediate future, of our own fertile tracts to the south so long cut off from the main lines of communication. The cultivator in those parts ploughs the soil and bends his back to the task of transplanting and reaping his crop with no less labour than his brethren in more accessible places, but between him and the markets of the province lies a stretch of difficult country and, even in the dry season, a painful trek over the sands of the Damodar. This bridge will lighten his burden and help him to share with his more fortunate neighbours the full fruits of his labour. Moreover, we know the distress that has overtaken the people south of this river at those times of flood, to which it is so often liable. We can imagine the sense of frustration of those who, situated on the north bank and within easy access of the resources of Calcutta and the province, find themselves cut off by an impassable river from suffering humanity in the south. To them, and still more to those who are exposed to the privations of the southern side, this bridge will bring a message of hope.

A task no less arduous lies ahead for the engineers who are to translate the plans of Government and the designer into solid and enduring concrete. I appreciate fully the responsibilities that they will have to face and the anxieties that they will pass through before they bring their work to a conclusion. But I am confident that their skill and devotion to duty will carry them through, and though I shall not be here in Bengal for long to watch the progress of the work, my sincere good wishes will follow their endeavours. For myself I can only say



that I am proud to have my name associated with so great and so beneficent a project and happy to have rendered such service as I could in helping to bring it to realisation.

AS you all know this conference has been called¹ to consider the question of bringing into operation the Bengal Waterways Act. It is a matter entirely within the sphere of duties of the Minister under the new Constitution. I have been asked to inaugurate this conference, I suppose, because I constitute an element of continuity in this matter as a link between the old administration and the new. This Act—the Bengal Waterways Act—has been on the Statute Book since June 1934 and it is an Act which, as you may know, has a long history behind it,—a history going back to the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1928.² That Commission ranged over a wide field and many of its recommendations are taking a new lease of life owing to circumstances already familiar to your minds. That Commission recommended the appointment of a technical committee of experts to examine and report on the advisability of the formation of a Waterways Board in Bengal. It did more than that. It definitely supported the principle of the administrative separation of the organisation for navigation from the organisation responsible for matters of irrigation and drainage. This Government accepted the views of the Committee and

¹ Speech at a Conference held at Government House, Calcutta, 26th July, 1937, regarding the formation of a Waterways Board.

² This Commission was presided over by Lord Linlithgow.



they set up a technical committee of experts as recommended by the Committee. That Committee was presided over by Mr. Hopkyns long before my time. The Committee went into the matter with very great thoroughness. They toured extensively, they consulted local opinion all over the Province, and in Assam, and they put forward definite recommendations, including a recommendation to the effect that a Waterways Trust should be set up. You know the subsequent history. A Bill was introduced and was placed on the Statute Book. The Waterways Act, would in the ordinary course have been put into operation long ago but its operation was long delayed because of the two assurances given by Government. The first assurance, given so long ago as 1932 when the subject was being discussed in the Legislature, was to the effect that if the Act were passed it would not be brought into operation so long as the state of economic depression, from which this Province in common with others was suffering, continued ; and the second assurance which the Government gave during the last stage of the passage of the Act was to the effect that the Act would not be brought into operation without prior consultation with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and other interests. Well, the position at the moment is, I am authorized to say, that Ministers have taken up the consideration of this matter, and subject to anything that may emerge from this consultation with interests affected, they are of opinion that the time has come when the Act should be put into operation. No one who has travelled in Eastern Bengal, as I have been able to do to a certain extent, will fail to realize the vital importance of improving the great system of waterways in Bengal. From the point of view of those who have to move goods or passengers, the

waterways of East Bengal stand in the same position as railways and roads in other provinces in India. In the case of railways the traffic bears all charges. As regards the roads, since they came to be developed under an organized scheme steps have been taken to ensure that the users of the roads make a substantial contribution towards their upkeep. In the case of waterways the position has been somewhat different. What Government have to decide is whether the waterways in East Bengal, occupying the position they do, are to be treated in a manner comparable to railways and roads, and do in fact constitute a separate interest justifying separate treatment. The Legislature when it passed the Act answered that question in the affirmative, and decided that at the proper time a Waterways Board should be constituted. From the point of view of technical efficiency I think there can be no doubt that the Royal Commission were right in saying that there should be an organic separation of the administration of navigable waterways as such from the other responsibilities which now rest on the Irrigation Department. The crucial question, is one of finance, and I think all present will probably agree that there is no use setting up a Waterways Board (necessarily a rather expensive type of organisation) unless that Waterways Board is able to do more for the waterways than it would be possible for the existing organisation to do. Under the Act the Board has to take over the existing equipment and resources of Government so far as they can be regarded as earmarked for the maintenance of navigation ; and, in addition, under the Act, Government have to make a statutory contribution which amounts to Rs. 2½ lakhs. When the Bill was introduced the figure was put a little lower than that and it was raised by an amendment in the Legislature, but



Government resisted the demand that the figure should be pitched still higher. The Act however, does contain provisions for supplementing the resources at the disposal of the Board by certain forms of taxation, and I should imagine that it is with regard to this aspect of the scheme embodied in the Act that you would especially desire to have an opportunity of bringing your views to the notice of Government. Government recognize that the onus of decision lies with them. But in fulfilment of the assurance that was given by my predecessor, I should give you this opportunity of putting before Government fully and frankly what you feel about the general question of the immediate setting up of a Waterways Board, with the concomitant imposition of some form of taxation within the scheme embodied in the Act, to ensure that the Board should have the resources necessary to enable them to do justice to their task.

I do not wish to anticipate the course of discussion and I know you will state your views frankly. I have no doubt that Government will give the fullest consideration to anything you say when they make their final decision. But my own view is that vitally important interests where navigation is concerned will not receive the attention they deserve among the conflicting interests in the Legislature, unless the waterways and interests connected with them are made a responsibility of a separate organisation. The Board contemplated in the Act is a Board which includes all the representatives of the interested bodies. It would therefore be in a favourable position to give due weight and consideration to all aspects of the question and pronounce an expert opinion.

X

IRRIGATION¹

ON the 25th November 1927, my predecessor Sir Stanley Jackson,² had occasion to remark that he very much regretted to hear of the distress which had been caused throughout a part of this district owing to the failure of early rains, and I find that on the same day he came to this very place and cut the first sod of the Damodar Canal project. It cannot often happen, except in fairy tales, that a Governor is so happily placed as to be able in the afternoon to inaugurate the construction of a great public work designed to meet a need which had been forcibly brought to his notice the same morning! Appreciated and utilized to the full, this project will abolish once and for all, for the large area which it is designed to serve, the cry "Our crops have failed for want of water." If for that reason alone,—and it is not the only reason,—I am glad that it has fallen to me to-day to make available to the cultivator the benefits of the scheme inaugurated by my predecessor nearly six years ago.

This scheme has long history. Originating in a project for a navigation canal with irrigation facilities, the scheme of 1869, which would have linked the Damodar near this

¹ Speech at the opening of the Damodar Canal, 2nd Sept., 1933.

² Sir Francis Stanley Jackson, P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., 1927-32.

point with the Hooghli near Baidyabati, was whittled down for one reason or another to the dimensions of the existing Eden Canal, which was opened in 1881 with the primary object of supplying pure drinking water to an area which had suffered by the embanking of the left bank of the Damodar south-east of Burdwan. The canal proved beneficial not only for its original purpose, but also for purposes of irrigation. But the absence of a weir and adequate head works at the point where it takes off from the river, has led to uncertainty regarding the supply of water,—a most serious defect in an irrigation canal and one which, as I shall presently show, it is one of the main objects of this new scheme to remedy.

About 30 years ago Mr. Inglis,¹ then Chief Engineer in Bengal, called attention to the great increase in the value of the crops irrigated from the Eden Canal as compared with those of neighbouring lands not so irrigated. Investigations were made and it is to be remarked that the local cultivators themselves admitted the beneficial effects of a supply of silt-laden river water to their fields during the cultivating season. Indeed, one more enthusiastic than the rest is recorded to have stated that with canal irrigation they were living in *Ram-raja*,²—the Golden Age!

In the following year, 1904, when Sir Andrew Fraser³ visited Burdwan, the municipality and the district board referred with appreciation to the benefits derived from irrigation by the people of the locality served by the Eden Canal, and specifically asked that a similar canal

¹ W. A. Inglis, C.S.I., Chief Engineer and Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal (Irrigation, Railway and Marine), 1902-1908.

² The finest and the noblest record of kingly rule depicted in the *Ramayana*, the great Indian epic.

³ Sir A. H. L. Fraser, I.C.S., K.C.S.I., M.A., LL.D., D.Litt. (Cal. University), Lt. Governor, 1903-1909.

should be constructed "between the Damodar river and the East Indian Railway" with the object of providing for "the western portion of the Sadar Subdivision, which portion suffers more often than others from insufficient rain". The request was repeated in 1907 by the same boards. To cut a long story short, I find it was made to a succession of my predecessors, ending with Lord Ronaldshay¹ in 1918, Lord Lytton² in 1923 and Sir Stanley Jackson in 1927.

All this is not of merely academic interest. My object is to make it perfectly clear that the canal, which I am to have the privilege of opening to-day, is not merely the outcome of the careful and deliberate consideration of Government matured over a period of more than 60 years, but also represents a response made by Government to a persistent and specific local demand. For the new canal will serve a double purpose. It is intended in the first place to render the existing Eden Canal incomparably more efficient by removing the defect, to which I have alluded, of uncertainty of supply, and in the second place to irrigate a large area in the Sadar Subdivision of Burdwan district which is at present liable to shortage of rainfall,—and not merely to irrigate, but to fertilize. Its object then, is to confirm and secure in the blessings they enjoy those who in the past have profited by the Eden Canal, and at the same time to extend those blessings to the area in the Sadar Subdivision whose plight has been so often brought to the notice of Government during the past 30 years.

I make no apology, for labouring the point that the canal has been constructed to meet a unanimous

¹ Marquess of Zetland, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., 1917-22. Present Secretary of State for India.

² Earl of Lytton, P.C., K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., 1922-27.



and persistent local demand, for the fact has to be faced that Bengal differs very materially in one respect from other parts of the world in which large irrigation schemes are carried through, schemes which transform the whole aspect of the countryside and literally cause the desert to blossom as the rose. There is no desert in this green Province of our's, and in our magnificent rivers we have, generally speaking, a very ample supply of water which, without any effort on our part, rises and floods our land in season, whether the monsoon is good or bad. But certain parts of Western Bengal are not so fortunately placed ; here the incidence of the rainfall is of vital importance, of importance not merely from the point of view that enough rain shall fall, but also from the point of view that it shall fall in the correct proportion from month to month. That is what makes the difference between a good harvest and a bad one in Western Bengal. It is related that when the great Sukkur Barrage¹ was opened, an inhabitant of Sind, gazing in wonder at the stream of water which was being diverted to the irrigation channel, exclaimed "Why, this is liquid gold !" And in the West the Nile has been aptly termed "the life-blood of Egypt". Water is not so unknown in Western Bengal that my Honourable friend will expect to hear the contents of his canal described as "liquid gold", and I hope that our natural supplies may never so completely fail that the Damodar Canal will in effect be the "life-blood" of the Burdwan and Hooghli Districts. But if the water-supply of Western Bengal never completely fails, it often falls

¹ Sukkur, a town and district in Sind, on the River Indus. The Sukkur Barrage was opened by Lord Willingdon, 13th/Jan. 1932. It serves some seven canals and covers a distance of two miles. This irrigation scheme is the greatest of its kind in the world, and cost £15,000,000.

woefully short, and still more often it does not come at the times when it is most required to ensure good crops.

It has been calculated that to produce good paddy crops in the area served by the Damodar and Eden Canals, there must be at least forty inches of rain during the season, of which a little should fall in May; twenty inches should fall in June-July; light periodical rain is wanted in August; and then another ten inches in September-October. Statistics recorded for the last twenty-six years in Mankar, at the western end of the canal area, show that these conditions have very rarely been fulfilled to the letter, and that purely from the view-point of water supply there were only five years in the twenty-six of which it could be said that irrigation might not have improved the crops. But water-supply is only part of the benefit which irrigation confers on the land served by it. As every cultivator knows, the river water has most valuable manurial properties owing to the silt which it deposits on the fields. Experiments on the Chinsura farm have shown the value, in terms of increased output of crops, of regular irrigation during the cultivating season. But that was not irrigation with the rich water of the river. I have seen figures which seem to indicate that irrigation with silt-laden river water will often double the return. Apart also from the improvement which a secured and regulated supply of water may be expected to produce in good lands, there is every reason to hope that a certain amount of land not at present in cultivation may be made remunerative by means of the facilities now offered. Finally—and not least important—there is the advantage to sanitation and public health which the proper flushing of the countryside ensures.



Government have undertaken this project in the expectation that an assured supply of river water will greatly increase the fertility of the areas served by the two canals, and that the health of the whole tract will simultaneously be improved. I know of no reason why those expectations should be falsified. To this end Government have spent on these works a sum of upwards of a crore of rupees out of the general resources of the Province. The direct benefits of the project are obviously confined to the area actually served. For that reason Government have a duty to ensure for the Province as a whole a fair return on the money laid out. As the Irrigation Commission remarked, "*Primā facie* there is no more reason for calling on the State, or in other words on the general tax-payer, to bear a permanent charge of say Rs. 6 per annum for the sake of increasing by irrigation the produce of an acre of land belonging to a private owner, than there would be for calling upon it to pay a similar amount for the purpose of supplying another man's acre with manure." In the case of the Damodar Canal the general tax-payer is providing a secure supply of water and of manure in the form of river silt. The tax-payer must at least be secured against a recurring loss on his outlay. He has not been so protected in respect of the Eden Canal on which there has been an annual deficit since the day it was opened. There, however, the lack of a weir at the headworks resulted in uncertainty as regards supply, and consequently the rates for water have had to be fixed at a lower level than sufficed to give a return on the project. Moreover, the canal was made in the first instance rather for sanitary than for irrigation purposes. In the present case an adequate supply of water is assured at the seasons when it is required. Charges can therefore

be fixed at a level which will relieve the general tax-payer of any unfair burden while at the same time leaving the cultivator immeasurably richer even at the current rates for agricultural produce than he has been or could be without the project. The charges published may at first glance have seemed heavy to those who have no experience of the benefits conferred. I would ask those to whom this criticism occurs to study the charges levied in other parts of India for similar benefits.

It may be that in this matter of charges a certain amount of education will be necessary. In an area like this which, unlike the arid tracts of the North-West, obtains in certain seasons a sufficient, if precarious, supply of water as the free gift of Providence, the cultivator who has not had ocular demonstration of the value of an assured supply, may be disposed to take the risk of dispensing with this artificial aid to prosperity specially when he finds that its use will cost him money. Such a policy, I need hardly say, would be exceedingly short-sighted, an assurance of good regular harvests being obviously well worth the moderate payments required. There is perhaps a risk also that others who do appreciate the value of irrigation may be disposed to take the line that, even if they themselves decline to take water-leases, they will get water for nothing because it is being supplied to their neighbours. If large blocks of cultivators were to adopt that course, not only would their selfishness recoil immediately upon their own heads through the stoppage of water-supplies, but,—a more important matter,—the anti-malarial value of the project would be seriously impaired, for this depends on the general flushing of a large tract of country simultaneously, and any serious measure of abstention would obviously defeat that object not only for the area in question, but



for neighbouring areas where leases had been taken. In January last when I visited Burdwan, I took occasion to refer in terms of commendation to the spirit of self-help and of ready co-operation which distinguished the people of the district. I hope that I may expect the same virtues in the people of the neighbouring district. Government look to those who have influence with the cultivators to use that influence to prevent the adoption of any such misguided or selfish attitude as that to which I have just referred. We believe that in schemes of irrigation and flood flushing there lie great possibilities for the regeneration of those districts of Western Bengal which are suffering from malaria, or from water scarcity to-day. In Midnapore, experiments which have been carried out by the people themselves, though under the expert supervision of the Irrigation Department, have been productive of excellent results and, as you are probably aware, a level survey which would provide the necessary basis for further schemes whether of local or provincial importance is at present in progress in the districts of Burdwan, Hooghli and Howrah. Should experience confirm—as we fully expect it to do—our estimates of increased outturn due to irrigation and, if it is proved that irrigation in the areas served by this canal can be made to pay for itself with a reasonable margin, Government will feel justified and encouraged in utilizing the revenues of the Province to introduce further schemes for irrigation and flushing from the rivers of Western Bengal.

The Honourable Member in the interesting speech to which we have just listened, has given us some account of the Damodar Canal project, of the character and dimensions of its various features and of some of the difficulties that have had to be surmounted. Ranked

with the irrigation schemes of some Provinces in India, the Damodar Canal cannot be said to be an undertaking of great magnitude. But for Bengal, where the activities of our Irrigation Department have hitherto been monopolized to a large extent by the problems of tidal waters, the harnessing of a river like the Damodar to the service of irrigation is a very considerable achievement and one of which the Department and the province may well be proud. I am particularly pleased on personal grounds also to be able to be present here to-day. I am in a position to appreciate, perhaps better than most, the keen personal interest which the Nawab Bahadur¹ takes in the administration of the Departments under him and the enthusiasm with which he throws himself into their working. If the Damodar Canal fulfils to a reasonable extent the high expectations with which it has been constructed, he will, I know, regard himself as amply rewarded in the increased health and prosperity of the people.

I have now great pleasure in opening the Damodar Canal and I hope during my term of office to find convincing evidence that Government, by this project, have been able to bring increasing prosperity and improved health to the people of this part of Bengal.

¹ The Hon'ble Alhadj Nawab Sir Abdelkerim Ghuznavi, Kt., formerly Member of the Bengal Executive Council.



XI

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YOUR detestation of violence as a political weapon has been expressed in no qualified words in the addresses presented to me to-day, and your offer of unreserved co-operation in assisting to suppress terrorist activities is a sign that you realize that until this movement is finally eradicated, the future of Bengal and its free institutions will be in jeopardy. The establishment of a District Welfare Association, supported, as I hope it is, by all sections of the community in this district, is a practical step in the right direction to protect the youth of your district from the contamination of those who are preaching the cult of violence, and I trust that it will function vigourously and encourage the formation of local Vigilance or Welfare Committees in every place where danger threatens.

It is a matter of some gratification to me to hear your appreciation of the efforts which my Government are making towards the economic reconstruction of Bengal. You mention some of the measures already adopted for this purpose, and I can assure you that possible methods to be adopted for solving these economic problems are constantly being considered by Government.

You lay emphasis on the fact that the deterioration

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Murshidabad, 16th Jan., 1935.

of the health, climate, trade and agriculture of this district is due in a large measure to the silting up of the mouth of the Bhagirathi,¹ which in seasons of deficient rainfall makes the condition of the agricultural population extremely bad.

As is well known, the Bhagirathi river, in olden times, formed a portion of the lower course of the river Ganges. Its decay dates from the avulsion of the river Ganges eastwards. The normal levels of the Ganges have been lowered, leaving the beds of the distributary rivers at a comparatively higher level, so that now the river is only a spill channel of the main river Ganges and only flows when the water level of the latter is comparatively high. Considerable siltation has occurred in its upper length, while the capacity of the river has been reduced in its lower reaches. For several years efforts were made to keep the mouth of the river open by dredging, but were unsuccessful, as the bed rapidly re-silted due to the shallow water surface slopes available. Hence, since 1911, it has been the practice to train the river by the process of bandalling, with the object of concentrating whatever flow is available into one big channel. The only really satisfactory method of ensuring a perennial supply in this river would be, I am told, by taking control of the parent channel (the Ganges river) by means of a barrage whereby the water level in that river can be raised to any required level, after which the required flow can be diverted down its distributaries. This, however, would be an enormous undertaking which cannot be considered at the present time owing to financial reasons.

¹ Another name for the Ganges, the holy river of the Hindus having its origin in the heart of the Himalayas.



As regards the *Rarh* tract,¹ the land in the northern portion of it is very fertile and the Irrigation Department will investigate the possibility of irrigating it from canals. Already some investigations have been instituted with a view to utilizing the supply of the Bansloi river for irrigation. If the investigations show that there are possibilities of exploiting other hill streams for irrigation, a scheme will be prepared. Similarly, an investigation is in progress to ascertain the possibilities of utilizing the water of the Morankhi river. The developments of any irrigation schemes in the southern portion of the *Rarh* tract will depend upon the results of those investigations.

The lack of an adequate system of irrigation has become more noticeable in this year of deficient rainfall, when the crops of this area of the district have completely failed. On the other hand the Bagri area² experienced heavy floods. To meet this situation, gratuitous relief and agricultural loans have been distributed and an organisation for test relief works has been set up. Government have advanced to the District Board a sum of Rs. 40,000 for test relief works, and have granted Rs. 3,000 for gratuitous relief in the flooded area. I shall be very pleased to supplement this latter contribution by granting a sum of Rs. 500, from moneys at my own disposal, to the Murshidabad Central Relief Committee. A sum of 1½ lakhs of rupees has also been sanctioned for Agricultural and Land Improvement loans. The District Board have done excellent work in the relief of distress, and Government will continue to render financial assistance to the Board as long as the need remains.

Not a small part of the ancient fame of this town

¹ The highlands of Bengal on the western side of the river Hooghly.

² Portions of North-western Bengal.

was due to its distinctive industries. These flourished principally when it was the seat of Government.¹ There is no longer the same local demand for expensive products, and producers have now to face the problem of finding a market for their wares over a widely extended area. The Silk Association which you have started, is evidence of the active interest taken locally in the matter, and I propose, as a small token of my personal appreciation of its existence, to make a contribution to its Funds. Government have given much attention to the problem, and proposals are now on foot which, in spite of these years of economic depression, seem to offer brighter prospects. The Silk Weaving and Dyeing Institute of Berhampore is doing useful work towards improving the processes of manufacture, and we hope before long to introduce improved machinery, which will extend the Institute's scope and add to its practical value. The post of Marketing Officer, temporarily created in order to help in establishing a firm connection between producer and purchaser, has been re-established. Again, the Central Government have now come to our help with an annual grant of Rs. 1 lakh a year for five years, to be spent on research and special measures to enable the industry to overcome its present difficulties. This valuable contribution will be used in organizing that reliable supply of disease-free seed, which is essential if the quality of Bengal silk is to be of a standard which will compete successfully with foreign products and command a ready acceptance by manufacturers in other provinces. Though the industry has been for some years struggling against market difficulties, I think that the steps now being taken justify some degree of optimism for the future.

¹ In pre-British days.



The question of ivory articles is on a somewhat different footing. Though the work produced here is noted for its quality and artistic value, it is an article of luxury, the demand for which must vary with the economic condition of the country, and also to some extent with the contemporary fashions. The local demand cannot now-a-days suffice to support an ivory industry of any great magnitude, and outside Bengal it has to compete with articles produced at other centres. The problem is one of creating a demand, and with this object the Department of Industries has twice sent samples and exhibits to London, where they attracted favourable attention. We have now under consideration a scheme for establishing an agency in London for the sale of Bengal art and craft wares, and if the scheme matures it may well prove of great assistance in securing orders from abroad. I may also mention that Government propose to assist, by a substantial contribution, an institution recently established in Calcutta through the voluntary effort of a number of ladies and gentlemen, who have given their time and energy unsparingly to the task of providing and running a depot where the products of village industries can be displayed and sold.

YOUR addresses are, as is natural, largely devoted to¹ questions relating to the economic life of Bengal and of your district in particular. It is gratifying to note your appreciation of the steps already taken by my Government towards the economic and rural reconstruction of Bengal, and I can assure you that it is my view and

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Bankura, 4th July, 1935.

that of my advisers that no problems confronting us to-day are more pressing than these.

Agriculture as you point out is the chief occupation of the bulk of the population of Bengal. For its success there are three main necessities—an adequate price for agricultural produce, a steady and even rainfall, and the conservation for purposes of irrigation of the water which yearly flows through the streams and rivers of your district.

The low price of paddy and rice have undoubtedly hit the agriculturists of your district very hard, whilst the unevenness of the rainfall during the last monsoon has increased their difficulties. I am informed that about 25 per cent of the lands ordinarily under rice in the district remained uncultivated last year owing to the absence of rain at the proper time. To meet any distress which is likely to occur after the winter rice crop has been harvested, your Collector has already obtained money both for agricultural and land improvement loans, and the Revenue Department of my Government will be ready to help the District Board in opening Test Relief Works should the District Board funds be insufficient to meet the charges.

In the course of your addresses you lay considerable stress on the fact that the frequent failure of crops in your district is due to the lack of adequate irrigation facilities and you make suggestions as to how these can be provided. The irrigation Department of my Government can provide, and have provided help in various ways. They are always ready to give you expert advice and to undertake the construction of schemes on payment of the costs plus establishment, tools and plant charges. They have framed irrigation plans covering 12,000 acres in your district and investigations are now in



progress on similar lines covering another two lakhs of acres.

Co-operative Irrigation Societies numbering 342 in all with a working capital of over 3 lakhs of rupees have played a very useful part in re-excavating tanks and small streams.

To consolidate the finances of Co-operative Societies in general the formation of new Irrigation Societies has been temporarily suspended, but it has now been decided to raise this embargo to some extent in localities where the working of existing societies has been sufficiently satisfactory to justify extension of the movement. I am informed that the local Co-operative Irrigation Societies have generally been successful except as regards those formed for the purpose of irrigation from streams, so that there would seem to be no reason why applications for the formation of fresh societies for tank irrigation should not be submitted with every chance of receiving sanction.

You also suggest that land improvement loans for irrigation purposes should be supplemented by Government contributions, similar to the financial assistance given to water-supply projects. But the analogy is not, I think, a true one. A water-supply project is of public utility in the true sense, whereas an "Improvement" under the Land Improvement Loans Act, (1883) is usually undertaken for the benefit of a limited group of persons and is designed to be remunerative.

The policy of Government in regard to irrigation projects must be governed by the consideration that they should not throw any burden on the provincial revenues, the principle being that those whose income is enhanced by reason of the increased crop yield, should bear the cost.

The Revenue Department of my Government have, however, decided to make an experiment by financing under the Land Improvement Loans Act a limited number of approved irrigation schemes. It is now for your village societies or groups of individuals to approach Government in this matter with your concrete proposals. The present rate of interest for these loans is $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent which is not in itself a high rate, but the Act provides for remissions in certain cases and deserving cases will be sympathetically considered.

The fact that the soil of your district is not so naturally fertile as that of the alluvial districts of this province, coupled with the more bracing climate, has in the past encouraged the development of various cottage industries and Government have naturally observed with concern their gradual decay—a symptom which, however, is not confined to this district alone. It is difficult for the products of such industries to compete with machine-made goods, and this is true particularly of your principal local industry, handloom weaving. The main causes of decline have been the lack of the training and expert advice which are required to make the hand-woven article equal or superior to the machine-made article in its appeal to the public and in addition a lack of marketing organisation. To meet these defects Government have for the last ten years borne the whole cost of three peripatetic weaving schools, which teach the cottage workers improved methods in their own homes. They have established and partly maintained both the District Weaving School, which gives more advanced training than can be furnished in the villages, and the Technical School at Vishnupur. Further, steps are in view for improving, with the help of Central Government funds, co-operative weaving societies and equipping them



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to meet the competition of large scale production. Again, thanks to the State Aid to Industries Act, capital is now available for those who can show that they will make a profitable use of it and can furnish adequate security.

In reminding you of the steps taken by Government to help in the solution of this problem, I must emphasize the fact that the responsibility for finding a remedy cannot be shouldered by Government alone. Nothing is likely to be achieved without the active co-operation of the District itself. When the District Industrial Association was recently invited to share in the benefits of the Unemployment Relief Scheme by receiving, and arranging for the work of demonstration parties in various industries, the response was not enthusiastic, and in such circumstances the Department of Industries is bound to concentrate attention on districts where a keener interest is displayed. It is for Government to support local endeavours and to point the way to improved methods, and this function Government are performing and will continue to perform. But here, as in other countries, the permanent success of an industry must depend ultimately on the degree of enterprise and initiative shown by the local bodies (in this case the District Industrial Association) and by the workers and organizers themselves. I am fully alive to the importance of this matter to your district, and I look forward to the opportunity, while I am here, of discussing with some of you certain steps which I think might with advantage be taken.

THE main portion of your addresses deals with¹ economic questions and the way to improve conditions in your part of rural Bengal. I am gratified to note your appreciation of my Government's efforts to promote rural reconstruction, and I can assure you that these will proceed with unabated vigour.

But, turning to your own immediate problems, I appreciate the fact that like other districts in Western Bengal, you are feeling acutely the results of the shortage and unevenness of the rainfall in 1934. This, in a time of economic depression, has necessarily meant hardship to numerous small agriculturalists. But efforts have been made to meet distress where it has shown evidence of being acute. Test relief works have been organized and these will continue to operate so long as the need exists, while provision has been made in the budget for the distribution of gratuitous relief up to Rs. 18,000. Rupees 10,000 has been sanctioned for your district on account of agricultural loans, of which two-thirds have already been distributed to enable the cultivators whose paddy crop failed, to purchase and sow fresh seeds. The Revenue Department of my Government are watching the situation carefully and realize what good work the District Board are doing to relieve distress. They will continue to give the Board the necessary assistance so long as the need continues.

It is true that these measures are only palliatives to tide over abnormal conditions and that measures of a more permanent character are desirable to effect a lasting improvement in the economic condition. You affirm that the prosperity of agriculture depends entirely on irrigation and water-supply. I agree that your cultivable areas are to a considerable extent dependent

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Suri, 6th Feb., 1935.



on adequate irrigation facilities. A complete survey of all the water courses of the district is, however, not called for since many are obviously unsuited for the purposes of irrigation. But it is certainly possible that numerous streams can be so utilized, and the officers of the Irrigation Department will always be ready to examine sympathetically any such proposals. In the meantime Government have already given the matter their close attention. New means of irrigation have already been furnished in considerable areas, though there has not always been that eagerness to take advantage of the new facilities that we should have expected. The Bakreswar river has been made use of, and the Bakreswar canal is in operation. It is designed to irrigate 10,000 acres, but so far not more than 8,900 acres have been irrigated in any one year. The first part of the Kashia Nullah scheme has been completed and is in operation. But there has been delay in depositing the cost, which has stood in the way of proceeding with the second part of the scheme. Other schemes for the development of the district are under investigation, including those mentioned in the District Board's address, the Mor Reservoir project, the Ajoy scheme and the Bansloi scheme—between them these projects are expected to irrigate an area of over 450,000 acres. The question as to when the schemes can be given effect to depends to a considerable extent on the co-operation of the residents of the areas affected. You will feel too, I have no doubt, that irrigation projects, designed as they are to bring direct pecuniary benefit to the inhabitants of a particular area, stand on a different footing financially from most other classes of public works. The first test to be applied to an irrigation scheme is : will it be remunerative ? While a charge may justifiably be laid on the

general resources of a province, so far as the extent of those resources allow, for improved water supplies or road communications or other services which are for the common good, irrigation projects must be, as they have always been, drawn up on the basis that the population of the localities concerned pay for the improvement out of their increased profits. Government furnish the services of an expert staff and may be in a position to advance the capital required for a scheme on terms as favourable as the state of the market allows. But there can be no large scale development unless the people themselves press for it and can see their way to meet the charges involved from the additional profits which will accrue to them.

In connection with the problem of deficient rainfall, you mention the ill-effects which have resulted from gradual denudation of the forest areas in Western Bengal, particularly as a cause of floods and of the deposit of sandbanks in navigable rivers. The difficulty of finding a remedy lies largely in the fact that these forests are not under the control of Government but are for the most part the property of private owners who are apt to give more consideration to immediate profit than to future improvement. Experiments were carried out on a small scale some years back in the Bankura District (where the same problem exists) with a view to discovering the best means of preserving existing forests and reafforesting waste areas, and were contemplated on a large scale at a considerable cost; but the financial depression intervened, and it has not been possible to proceed with the investigations. I fear that it is not likely that Government will be able to provide funds for this purpose during the coming financial year. I agree with you, however, that the question is one of great



importance, and I will see that it is not allowed to drop.

Undoubtedly one of the outstanding problems of the day, and at the same time one intimately connected with economic progress, is the question of rural indebtedness to which your address calls attention. The references to the so-called failure of the co-operative movement show some misunderstanding of the position. They ignore the successful working of numerous Co-operative Irrigation Societies in your district, the very striking benefits that have been conferred on thousands of agriculturalists by the provision of money at a reasonable rate of interest, and the encouragement of mutual help and thrift, and they condemn the movement for not achieving objects which are beyond its scope. The debt problem is indeed so complex that no one line of action can furnish a complete remedy. The Co-operative Department has done much, and is now proceeding to supply a further long-felt want by the establishment of Land Mortgage Banks with facilities for securing long-term credit. One of these banks has recently been opened in your district and when in full working operation will, I hope, assist materially in relieving the cultivator of the heavy and onerous burden of debt. In the meantime the whole problem has been subjected to close examination by the Board of Economic Enquiry, which Government have set up to assist them in working out schemes for the amelioration of the condition of the agricultural population of the province, and the first results of their deliberations have just been placed before the public.



I SUPPOSE that in the land of my birth the name¹ "Bengal" conjures up in the minds of persons unacquainted with India one of three things according to their age and interests,—tigers, jute and tea ; and I am free to confess that I have looked forward with more than usual interest to visiting the only district in the Province which can boast a notable output of all three ! Tigers are perhaps hardly a commercial proposition—though there was a time, I believe, not so very long ago, when elephants certainly were,—and as regards jute and tea I am only too well aware of the extent to which, at the moment, both these important branches of agriculture, with their attendant industries, have been affected by the general economic depression. It is with the fortunes of tea, as I gather from your addresses, that the prosperity of the district is mainly linked, just as it is in connection with that industry that so many of your problems arise. The problem of communications, for example, occupies a prominent position in more than one of your addresses, as is natural, considering that good communications are necessary not only to enable the industry to dispose of its finished product, but also to enable the rice-growing population in the southern parts of the district to supply the large labour population of the tea gardens, which can, only to a very partial extent, be self-supporting.

In the matter of communications the chief source of anxiety at the moment is undoubtedly the threatened break-through of the Teesta into the basin of the Jaldhaka, with the consequent breaching of the railway on which the whole area between the Teesta and the Torsa depends. Any such alteration in the course of the Teesta would be a disaster, not only to this district, but also to the neighbouring State of Cooch Behar, a corner of

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Jalpaiguri, 9th Feb., 1933.



which would undoubtedly be devastated by the waters of the combined Teesta and Dharla rivers, and it is by no means certain that the Eastern Bengal Railway's main line bridge at Mogalhata, just north of Lalmonirhat, would be able to stand the strain of the vastly increased Jaldhaka flood. This is a point to be borne in mind when considering the usefulness of a railway line connecting Madarihat with Dinhata, as advocated in the Duars Planters' address. For if one effect of the junction of the Teesta and the Jaldhaka would be to endanger the bridge at Mogalhata, it would appear that the only link that would really ensure the Duars an alternative outlet in the event of a break-through at Barnes would be a connection between the Bengal Duars Railway terminus at Bagrakote and the Eastern Bengal Railway at Siliguri—by way either of Sevoke or of Phulbaria. This, however is primarily a matter for the Railway Board, who have not as yet, I am afraid, been convinced of the remunerative potentialities of any of the projects suggested—not even of the Madarihat-Dinhata proposal.

So far as the prevention of erosion at Barnes is concerned, I have already seen many reports on the subject and I am fairly conversant with the views of the railway authorities and our own engineers. I hope to hear something of your own views while I am here—indeed the urgency of the problem is one of the reasons for my making a visit to Jalpaiguri so early in my term of office.

It is not suggested by any responsible body of opinion that the training of a river of the magnitude and volume of the Teesta in flood is a feasible proposition, at all events at an outlay that would be within reasonable bounds, and the measures taken last year—to which the Duars Planters' Association have referred in their address

—were not directed towards either the training of the river or the absolute prevention of erosion. The object of the construction of silting pockets along the east bank of the Teesta was, I understand, to raise the level of the watershed between the Teesta and the Dharla so that if a breach did occur in the railway line—which is now on the crown of the watershed—the amount of spill water that could find its way across country into the Dharla would be diminished and the danger of this spill cutting a wide and deep channel between the two rivers would be considerably reduced. I am told that so far the results achieved have been not unpromising, but the risk remains and I fully appreciate its gravity. I am afraid I have not come here to-day with any readymade solution in my pocket. I hope to visit the danger point to-morrow to see things for myself both there and elsewhere. I shall then be in a better position to discuss the matter as I shall certainly do when I go to Delhi later in the month. In the meantime I believe that the shingling of the Madarihat Falakata Road (which has recently been taken in hand by the District Board) would provide an alternative outlet, should communications at Barnes be seriously interrupted. I am told that water transport is available southwards from Falakata.

I sympathize with you and with your fellow planters in the Duars Planters' Association, in the position of anxiety in which you find yourselves to-day, and I fully appreciate the disastrous results which must ensue not only to you but to the large population whose fortunes are bound up with those of your industry, should there be a widespread closing down of gardens owing to the present depression. In your address you say that "the whole industry is doomed unless it receives tangible and substantial help" from my Government and you invoke



my own personal "patronage and support for the industry". My Government are fully alive to the important and beneficial results that flow from the existence of a flourishing and contented industry occupying so large a part of the Crown Lands of the Province, and while I have no brief to speak for the "financiers and the Agency Houses" of whose attitude you complain, I feel sure that, if only from motives of self-interest, they are doing all they can to save the industry (both British and Indian owned) from a collapse from which they themselves could have nothing to gain. I am afraid, however, that they are faced with the same difficulty that faces my Government,—or any other Government if it comes to that,—in dealing with the effects of a depression which is world-wide in its incidence. In circumstances such as these, it is very difficult, even were there no other objections, for any individual Government to make provisions which would offer a reasonable hope of relieving the present position of the Planters. I understand, however, that certain negotiations have been set on foot to relieve the industry by the regulation, for a period of five years, of exports "with a view",—as the Duars Planters' Association have said,—"to bringing about a happier ratio between supply and demand in consuming countries". This is a matter for the Central Government, who have already indicated that if an agreement is arrived at requiring Government action in some form to render it effective, they are prepared to consider any practical scheme which the trade can put forward. But Government intervention in such matters is not to be lightly invoked or lightly undertaken, and Government must await specific and broadly agreed proposals from the industry.

The question of tariffs and preferences to which you seem to make allusion is, of course, a matter of policy

for the importing countries themselves, but you have at any rate secured a solid advantage in the ratification of the Ottawa Agreement.¹

Unlike the other matters referred to, the question of rent for tea grants does, of course, come entirely within the sphere of responsibility of the Provincial Government. But here, while it is unfortunate that many of the leases should fall due for renewal at a time of general depression, you must bear in mind that Government in renewing the grants cannot be guided exclusively by the conditions of the moment, but have to bear in mind that the terms of the new leases will run for a long period of years. Even so, I would remind you that the figures recently supplied by your Association for a large number of tea gardens showed that charges on account of enhancement of rent amounted to only 1·23 per cent of the total expenditure of the gardens in question—which, you must admit, is not a very serious burden—and that considerable concessions of a temporary nature and designed to help you to tide over the present bad times, have already been granted with respect to rent for areas which we have agreed to treat as “waste land”. As regards a “substantial allowance of time for payment of revenue”, I have not heard as yet of any garden that has been unable to pay its revenue, but I believe that in any case a considerable time is ordinarily allowed under existing rules for payment in cases where default is due to inability to pay.

WITH reference to the problem of dying rivers, I fear² that as regards the Ichhamati I see little prospect of

¹ Vide page 66.

² Reply to the Addresses presented at Pabna, 15th August, 1935.

carrying through any isolated scheme. Its deterioration started long ago with the change in the course of the Brahmaputra which has had such far-reaching effects here and elsewhere. You speak of dredging. But the cost of this would be very great, while, owing to the fact that the river bed falls very gradually, fresh deposits would quickly form and the effect of the work would not be permanent.

The other rivers have all been the subject of investigation. Here, too, changes in the course of the greater rivers are the primary cause of the trouble. The Irrigation Department is collecting the necessary data regarding their present courses and is investigating a scheme for flushing the Fuljhore by drainage from the Chalan Bil.¹ But I must repeat what I have already said that isolated schemes for individual rivers are not likely to afford a permanent solution of the problem. Your difficulty is common to a large part of Northern Bengal and has a common origin. To deal with the problem finally and successfully we have to go to the root causes and treat it as a whole. We have to work on a scale larger than that of a single district. It is a question in which my Government are keenly interested, and it was largely to take power to deal with it effectively that the Development Bill, which in the course of a few weeks will be on the Statute Book, was introduced. When this Bill becomes law we hope that the financial difficulty, which has hitherto stood in the way of progress, will be overcome, and that we shall be able to take up the problem on the scale which its importance demands.

In speaking of Land Mortgage Banks you suggest that the restrictions placed on the grant of loans are such

¹ A famous lake in North Bengal. Bil—a lake.

as are liable to reduce the practical value of these institutions. I have considered the points which you mention, but cannot agree that any of the safeguards are at this stage superfluous. These banks are a new development so far as Bengal goes, and must for the present be regarded as experimental. We aim at bringing appreciable relief to embarrassed agriculturists, but it is obvious that the new banks can achieve nothing of permanent value unless their financial basis is thoroughly sound. An examination of the restrictions that you mention—excluding that as regards the minimum amount for which an application can be made, which I think, is mentioned under a misunderstanding, as no such restriction exists—shows that all are essential if the banks are to succeed. Thus it is evident that a properly organized bank cannot be content to rely on mortgages if a co-sharer can at any time prevent the bank from realizing the value of the property. It is open to the applicant whose co-sharers refuse to join in his application, to approach his landlord to register his share separately. Again, the land alone can furnish sufficient security for the long-term loans in question. Personal sources of income, which may cease to exist even during the applicant's life-time, cannot ensure the banks against loss.

You will, I am convinced, agree that financial stability is essential for the success of the banks, and I think that further reflection will satisfy you that no restriction has been imposed that is not at this stage necessary for their welfare. Government are keenly interested in enabling the banks to work without impediment, and if experience shows that any of the conditions under which advances are made can safely be relaxed, Government will have no hesitation in modifying the by-laws accordingly.



I now come to the water-hyacinth problem. My remarks on this subject must necessarily be a repetition of what I have said elsewhere in dealing with the same question. Briefly, the position is this. No practical solution has yet been discovered anywhere by which this pest could be completely eradicated except at a cost which would be prohibitive—for Bengal alone the estimate is five crores of rupees, and even then the weed would probably be re-introduced by fresh plants floating down the waterways from outside the Province, or from some small area in the interior of the Province which had not been entirely cleared. Not only this, but it is now known that the water-hyacinth reproduces itself by seeding and not, as used to be thought, only by the breaking away of parts of the parent stem.

It follows from these three factors—prohibitive cost, the practical certainty of re-introduction of the plant, and its establishment by seed—that for the present at any rate Bengal must be reconciled to the prospect of keeping water-hyacinth within reasonable limits by locally organized voluntary effort. This has been done in Cuttack with a great measure of success and also in Brahmanbaria, in three subdivisions of Faridpur and in parts of the Rajshahi district. When these examples are imitated extensively elsewhere, aided, perhaps, by legislation to force the minority, who are not prepared to clear their lands voluntarily, there is no doubt that the water-hyacinth, even though, to borrow a medical term, it may remain endemic, yet will cease to be an epidemic scourge, and after the first great effort or two the task of preventing it from being more than endemic should be one of reasonable proportions. The question of stimulating a campaign of this sort, and of aiding it by legislation, is at present under consideration, and I hope

that it may be possible to announce a definite policy in the matter before the end of this year.

I WILL deal first with those questions of general¹ interest and importance which affect the district as a whole. You ask for my Government's help in protecting and developing the silk and lac industries, which you point out have fallen upon evil days.

The question of protecting and fostering the indigenous sericultural industry has been engaging the close attention both of the Central Government and the Government of this Province. So far as competition is concerned, a measure of protection has already been afforded under the Indian Tariff (Textile Protection) Amendment Act of 1934. There remains the question of development. The Government of India have decided to provide for five years, beginning with the present financial year, an annual sum of one lakh for special schemes for the improvement and development of the sericultural industry. This sum has to be shared between the various interested provinces, and in the present year the share of Bengal is Rs. 41,347. My Government will spend the whole of this sum in addition to their normal expenditure on sericultural work.

In selecting the schemes to be taken up, it has been recognized that the most important among the many problems of the industry is the supply of seed cocoons free from disease. With this object in view a scheme has been undertaken to produce, through the agency of selected rearers, a supply of such cocoons under departmental

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Malda, 5th Feb., 1936.



supervision. It will also provide for research into the causes of silk-worm disease.

To cover the cost of improving and thoroughly disinfecting the houses for the rearing of disease free seed cocoons, bonuses amounting to ten thousand rupees will be given to the selected persons, and from this the Malda District will benefit to the extent of five thousand rupees. Ex-students of sericultural schools who construct approved houses for seed cocoon rearing; will be rewarded from funds provided in the provincial budget.

The Malda Co-operative Silk Union, which was established in 1927, is directing its attention to the reorganisation of the industry in its various phases, from the rearing of cocoons to the export of finished silk products. The Marketing Officer on the staff of the Industries Department, who was appointed about two years ago, is also in touch with the trade with a view to opening out markets for silk yarns and fabrics.

One of the main factors, however, in the decline of the silk industry has been the crude and antiquated methods of reeling that have been practised. The immediate problem is to devise a suitable reeling plant which will be within the reach of the cottage worker and show him a reasonable profit. The Mysore domestic basin type of reeling plant has been introduced at the Government Silk Weaving and Dyeing Institute at Berhampore and at Piasbari in your district. The question of installing a modern silk reeling plant at the Piasbari nursery, for demonstration purposes, is at present under consideration. I trust that these measures will contribute substantially to the improvement of the silk industry and to the prosperity of your district.

I turn now to the question of lac. As a result of an expert enquiry, bulletins of instruction for lac cultivation,



including the care of brood lac, were widely distributed in the district. It has been recognized, however, that the best means of giving effect to the expert's recommendations is to employ trained demonstrators who will be able to make practical suggestions to cultivators of the crop. With this view the Indian Lac Cess Committee were approached and have agreed to consider definite proposals. A complete scheme is being submitted, and I hope that the Indian Lac Cess Committee will be able to provide the staff required for this purpose in the near future.

YOUR plea for funds to carry on the fight against leprosy¹ has my warm sympathy. I wish I could hold out to you some hope of financial assistance. For the present, though grants are made to certain institutions where lepers are treated, Government cannot even contemplate undertaking a general responsibility for the treatment of leprosy. The object of the survey at present being carried on by the Bengal Branch of the Empire Leprosy Association (to which Government contribute) is to secure correct and up-to-date information as to the prevalence of the disease, and to indicate thereby to local bodies on what lines the work of establishing leprosy clinics should be carried on. You will readily understand that other districts in Bengal also have this problem to face, and Government have to see that the limited resources available for the work are utilized in such a way as to benefit as many districts as possible. I can only say that when funds become available Government will

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Midnapore, 16th Jan., 1933.



naturally give preference to those areas which have shown a disposition to help themselves and which have an organisation in being.

You have referred to the apparent success of the experiment inaugurated as a direct result of the efforts of the late Mr. Peddie¹ for meeting the malaria menace by flushing the affected areas with flood water from the rivers. The matter is one in which I take a keen interest and I believe that in this, as in so many other aspects of his work for the people, Mr. Peddie's instinct was sound. It is, of course, early yet to say definitely how far the experiment has been a success in the particular and limited area to which it has been applied, but it is clear that results achieved to date are most encouraging and already much valuable information has been made available. Apart from the technical data which have been collected, I think that one of the first lessons to be learnt from last year's experience is the value of co-operation in a matter of this kind. In the Narayangarh and Pingla areas, for example, though the inspiration came from the Collector and the skilled supervision was supplied by the Irrigation Department, the carrying out of the scheme was entrusted to *ad hoc* Committees formed locally, and the labour was given by the people of the areas affected. I am told that in the areas where the scheme was worked, even those who were most sceptical at the outset are now convinced of the beneficial result of these operations, and that there is a general demand that similar operations shall be undertaken this year. I hope that it may be possible to do this; how far it will be feasible to extend the experiment to other areas, will depend partly on the extent to which this can be done

¹ James Peddie, I.C.S., formerly District Magistrate, Midnapore. A victim of terrorism.

without serious detriment to canal revenue and partly on the willingness of the people of other areas to help themselves, following the admirable example of the people of Pingla and Narayangarh. To the latter,—the members of the Committees who took upon themselves and carried out these voluntary labours and to the people themselves who did the work,—I extend my thanks and my congratulations.



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I

MIDNAPORE¹

I HAVE looked forward with more than ordinary interest to this visit to your historic town and district. Your affairs have been much before me—not, I am sorry to say, always in a favourable light—since I came to Bengal some ten months ago.

The history of that portion of Bengal which now goes by the name of Midnapore District well illustrates the fortunes—perhaps I should say “misfortunes”—which are apt to attend those whose position is that of a frontier tract. Situated between the fringes of the Chota-Nagpur plateau and the rich alluvial plains of Bengal, affording access along the sea-board between the delta of the Ganges and the countries further south, this district has been the scene of almost constant warfare from earliest times till well on into the British regime. To the struggle between Aboriginal and Aryan, the contest of Aryan with Aryan succeeded. Kalinga fought with Magadha, Oriya with Bengali, and their successive battles were largely fought out on the debatable land of which this town is now the capital. The Mahommedan conquest brought no lasting peace, for that itself led to the rivalry of Afghan and Mogul. Even the earlier years of the East India Company's occupation, were

¹ Midnapore Speech, 16th January, 1933.

not without bloodshed and rapine from the raids of the Mahrattas and the depredations of the Chuars. Midnapore was a garrison town of the East India Company's troops until the annexation of Orissa in 1803, and probably for some time after the final subjugation of the Chuars in 1816.

After an interval of many years Midnapore has once more become, for the time being at least, a garrison town. Midnapore district is once more a centre of unrest, developing from time to time into violence, and a source of anxiety to Government. The people of the district are once more confronted by organized interference with their private liberties and threats to the peaceful pursuit of their own avocations. The difference between the present troubles and those to which I have referred is not only a matter of scale,—for the unruliness of Tamruk and Contai is not a matter to be compared with the rapine of a Mahratta invasion,—but rather a difference of kind. The present troubles of the district owe their existence not to the invader from without, but to turbulence within. They are not inflicted by a cruel neighbour, but self-imposed by your own kith and kin.

To take up the matter of terrorism. Let me make it clear at once that I welcome the expressions of condemnation and abhorrence which have been voiced in reference to the crimes committed in your midst during the past three years. I welcome also your offers of support to Government in fighting this menace to ordered administration and progress. I hope these offers will speedily be translated into deeds, for, believe me, there is much that you and only you can do towards the eradication of this evil thing, and there is much leeway to make up. It has been said that "The hearts



of the majority of the people of the district are sound and we pray that they may not be judged by the misdeeds of a few benighted young men, mostly belonging to other places, who tarnished the fair name of the district by the brutal and cowardly murder of two successive District Magistrates". Now, in so far as these words truly represent the state of feeling in the district I am glad to hear them, and even in so far as they may merely betoken a desire to disown individuals whose cowardly actions have brought a load of shame to it, they are a healthy sign. But, I am bound to say, I am not convinced that the words which I have quoted do justice to the proven facts. It is a curious thing—and noteworthy—that whenever the people of a district are taken to task for acts of violence committed among them by members of terrorist organisations, there is a tendency to impute the blame to the outside young men not belonging to the locality in which the crime took place.

In the case of Midnapore what are the facts? Leaving out of account more ancient history, let us take only the recent outrages by which two valuable public servants lost their lives. The only person brought to justice for complicity in either of these crimes is a young man of Midnapore. In both cases men who had set themselves deliberately to commit murder were able to plan their attack and make good their escape with the connivance of people of this town, and it has proved almost impossible to collect any information whatsoever regarding their movements, either before or after the commission of the crimes. In the case of a young man known to many of you, as was the convicted murderer of Mr. Douglas², the fact that soon after his arrest none would come

¹ Robert Douglas, M. A., I. C. S., District Magistrate, Midnapore.

forward to give information as to his movements before the crime, tells its own tale of non-co-operation¹—to give it no harsher term. If you are so satisfied that the young men concerned in these offences come “mostly from other places”, it is your duty to see that these young men are brought to justice, or at least that they do not get access to your town and district, to poison the minds of your own sons and daughters and bring disgrace upon you all. It really will not do to say, “Young men from other districts come and do these deeds” and leave the matter there. If the evil has mainly spread to you from outside, I fear your record was not blameless even before the outrages to which I have specifically referred. But the remedy for you should be the easier, because it is certainly not less incumbent upon you to seek it.

But terrorism is not the only evil from which you are suffering. For more than ten years past, certain portions of Midnapore have been notorious for sporadic outbreaks of what I cannot call merely “lawlessness” but organized defiance of law, and the past three years have witnessed a regular campaign of this character marked with violence, which has not stopped short of arson and murder.

I am afraid I must say to you quite frankly that I know of no district in Bengal which affords a better illustration of the evils that follow inevitably—as the night the day—from any organized attempt to undermine the authority of the law. Confronted with such a situation, Government have to choose between two alternatives, either to give in—a course which, I can assure you, the present Government have no intention of following—or

¹ The word which has been much in vogue since Mr. Gandhi's advent into Indian politics.



to take up the challenge and re-establish respect for law and constituted authority by recourse to the special powers with which they have been armed in order to meet just such a contingency. I have no doubt that the measures which Government have been forced to take will succeed. They will certainly attain their purpose and restore to the district the tranquillity which all right-minded people must eagerly desire in times of economic depression. This can be ensured only if the local support which Government are entitled to claim, and of which welcome indications are making themselves evident elsewhere, is freely vouchsafed. In the discussion of these topics I have thought it best to speak frankly, for the sooner the facts are faced—be they never so unwelcome—the earlier will the district settle down to an era of peaceful progress.

You have requested that, with the stationing of a Regiment in Midnapore, the additional Police posted here at the expense of a section of the inhabitants should be withdrawn. This betrays, if I may say so, some misconception of the relative functions of the Police and the Military. The Police have certain definite duties to perform,—duties which cannot appropriately be placed upon or discharged by soldiers. As the normal Police force had proved insufficient for the adequate fulfilment of Government's responsibilities in an area which had shown itself to be in a disturbed and dangerous state, and where the co-operation of the public in the detection and suppression of crime had proved conspicuously lacking, additional Police had to be posted here, and the stationing of troops has, I am afraid, no bearing on this question.

II

GOVERNMENTAL MEASURES¹

THIS is the first occasion—though in view of a recent announcement not, I hope, the last—upon which I have had the pleasure of addressing the present Council on/matters of business. After nearly a year at the head of the local administration, it may be appropriate that I should take the opportunity of bringing briefly under review the/main problems of our Province, political and administrative, as they present themselves to me.

Among political problems, the most serious, both in its immediate aspect and in its bearing upon/the future well-being of the Province, is that presented by the continued existence of a terrorist conspiracy with ramifications extending throughout and beyond the limits of the Province. The recordxof the year has been marred by a number of deplorable outrages, as a result of which four valued servants of the Government have lost their lives. It is an/elementary obligation of Government—an obligation which they owe equally to their own officers and to the public at large—to combat this menace by all the means at their/disposal. To that end the resources of the Police have been strengthened in various directions in pursuance of a considered policy. Bodies of troops have also been stationed at various

¹ Speech at the Bengal Legislative Council, 28th Feb., 1933.



centres throughout the Province so that there may be no room for doubt, either as to the determination of Government to grapple effectively with the situation, or as to the reserves upon which they can draw in case of need. In these measures we have, of course, enjoyed the advantage of the ready co-operation of the Government of India, at whose charge the troops are maintained. I am satisfied that the presence of the troops has had the effect that was anticipated, and that the misgivings that were expressed in certain quarters have been proved groundless.

Side by side with these administrative measures the provisions of the ordinary law have been reinforced. During the year this Council passed the Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act, as well as minor amendments to the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Arms Act, thereby arming the Government with useful additional powers. There are, I am glad to say, encouraging indications of an improved and a progressively improving situation.

Civil disobedience¹, except in a few areas, is no longer an active menace, though the mischief is in many places only latent and still liable to break out afresh if the grip of the law were to be relaxed.

It is a matter for satisfaction that the Ordinances have now been withdrawn and their place taken, so far as necessary, by Acts of the Legislature. The thanks of Government are due to this Council for their timely recognition of the need for equipping the Executive with exceptional powers. The Council were assured that Government would use the powers so conferred with moderation, and would invoke them only where real need was shown to exist. I invite your attention to

¹ Vide page 63.



the fact that the Emergency Powers Chapter of the Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act has been applied only to eight districts in the Province, and the Public Security Act to only three subdivisions of one district and one subdivision of another.

5 A year ago the Ordinances, which these Acts replaced, were in operation throughout the Province. The co-operation of the Council with Government in the enactment of these measures is, I am glad to think, being reflected in an increasing disposition on the part of the general public to support and assist Government in its task of maintaining peace and good order. Apart from minor incidents, the Province has, on the whole, been free from outbreaks of either communal or agrarian disorder.

6 So much for ordinary crime. As regards political crime¹, your Inspector-General², in the report which he has submitted to Government for 1934, says that terrorist activities showed no sign of abatement. That statement requires a word of explanation. The situation to-day is certainly better—a good deal better—than it was two or three years ago. But all our information, unfortunately, goes to show that although the result of the efforts that have been made has been to diminish the number of outrages, yet the terrorist virus is still active and malignant. That there should still be, after most of the leaders have been placed under restraint, so much fresh activity shows how deep seated the poison is, and how necessary it is to steadily continue the policy adopted by Government

¹ Speech at the Police Parade, Calcutta, 11th July, 1935.

² Thomas Joseph Alexander Craig, C.I.E.



7 which has resulted in the improved situation, and how vital it is that the public should continue to co-operate in the campaign. This is the point that I wish to impress upon those who advocate a relaxation of the pressure on terrorists. The public hear of an apparent improvement in terrorist crime. But they know nothing of the terrorist conspiracies which are unearthed or of the outrages planned but nipped in the bud before they can mature, and they see and hear little of the action taken by Government to relax restrictions and to move detenus from detention camps to village or home domicile. Considerable numbers have, during the last two years, been so removed or released altogether. But the constant discovery of fresh conspiracies has necessitated fresh arrests which have given a static appearance to the policy of Government that is far from representing the actual facts. An experiment is being tried of the return of detenus in greater numbers to their homes in cases where responsible committees of non-officials are willing to exercise superintendence over them. A certain number of detenus have also been released recently on bonds of good behaviour executed by them, and on the security of their parents or guardians. It is too early yet to judge how far these methods can be extended, but Government have in contemplation other means by which it may be possible to give detenus, under proper security, a chance to qualify themselves for occupations and to show that they mean to be good citizens.

When I spoke in 1933, I laid stress on the fact that it was the work of the country as a whole and not merely of Government, to fight and overcome terrorism. A lead to that end was given by the great anti-Terrorist Conference¹.

¹ All-Bengal anti-Terrorist Conference held on the 15th & 16th Sept., 1934, at the Town Hall, Calcutta.

There is now a lively appreciation throughout the country, that the terrorist menaces not merely the Government of to-day, but the whole future welfare of the province. Nevertheless, it is essential that this attitude should harden into a practical determination to express itself quite definitely by word and deed so that the terrorist may be regarded as a public enemy. He will then cease to consider himself a patriot and turn his energies into channels of usefulness to his country. In particular, it is necessary that those who have charge of, or influence over adolescents should spare no endeavour to protect them from the possibility of recruitment to the terrorist ranks.

I DEAL first with the subject of terrorism. When I last¹ spoke, the law had already been strengthened in several respects and additional bodies of troops had been stationed in various parts of the Province as an emergency measure. During the period under review two further laws have been placed on the Statute Book, Act VI of 1934, dealing with the smuggling of arms, and a still more important enactment, Act VII of 1934. It may be recalled that under the law as it stood before this enactment, no action could be taken until a person had actually become a member of a terrorist organisation and orders had to be passed by the local Government in each case, no matter what the form of restraint contemplated. That procedure made it impossible to deal with young persons who were being led astray until the process had been completed. It involved delay in obtaining orders during which the persons concerned

¹ Bengal Legislative Council Speech, 11th Feb., 1935.



had often to be confined in gaols in association with confirmed terrorists. Act VII of 1934 added a section to the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930 so as to empower District Magistrates to take prompt action at an early stage, in consultation with parents and guardians, to prevent young persons being drawn into the terrorist movement. Information from the districts goes to show that this power has proved most valuable, and the Council are to be congratulated on having placed Government in a position to reclaim a considerable number of young men who were about to tread a dangerous path.

By the same enactment the law was strengthened in various other respects, and it is now possible, after a lapse of two years, to estimate the effect of the various measures taken. The legislature will doubtless wish to know how far they were justified in arming the executive with the admittedly drastic powers they now possess. However, there is no intention of using these powers except in so far as actual necessity may arise. It is hoped that they may prove, in the course of time, to be more valuable in reserve than in operation. It may be said with a fair measure of confidence that Government now have a much tighter hold on the situation than ever before and are in an infinitely better position to keep the menace in check. And for this, our thanks are due to the strengthening of the law to which I have referred, to the better organisation of intelligence, and to the stout-hearted efforts of the police of all ranks, British and Indian, in collaboration with District Officers and aided by the presence and co-operation, in a number of the most difficult areas, of units of the military forces. I can give you certain figures which will tell their own story. In 1932 the number of crimes of various classes attributed



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to terrorist activity was 99; in 1933 the number had fallen to 42, and last year it was only 14.

Taking the situation as a whole, therefore, there has been a steady improvement, and the Province has happily been free from any serious terrorist crime since last May. It is important to realize, however, that this improvement welcome though it is, is attributable not to the abandonment of terrorist aims but to disorganisation and weakening brought about directly by Government action. Though during the past two years, more than 100 persons who were evading arrest have been apprehended, and though in the same period no fewer than 72 revolvers and 27 pistols have been recovered, there are desperate characters still at large, and sharp reminders are received from time to time of the fact that recruiting and plotting are still actively proceeding. It is certain that if pressure were relaxed the situation would speedily deteriorate.

What, it may be asked, is to be the end of it all and is there to be no word of hope for the detenus? The answer that Government must give is clear. Until they can be satisfied that recruiting activity and revolutionary plotting have abated, if not altogether, at least to such an extent that relaxation of pressure would not immediately be followed by an accession of strength to the terrorist ranks, the measures of appeasement which Government will certainly be in a position to put forward at the appropriate time must be delayed. Too much has already been sacrificed—and that by no means entirely on the side of Government—in the determination to stamp out this vile thing once and for all to warrant the taking of any undue risk. But let it not be thought that Government pin their faith to repressive measures alone. That is indeed far from being the case.



About the underlying causes of terrorism opinions may differ, but few would be found to deny that if our province of Bengal is to be safe for the future, there must be a change of outlook, or—what is not quite the same thing—a change of prospect, and that change is to be brought about, not by any one method, but by a combination of many.

Public opinion is a potent force, and I acknowledge gladly that there has been a significant change in the attitude of the public towards terrorism during the past year. Where previously there was an attitude of indifference or even of passive sympathy, engendered perhaps by a feeling that in some way or other terrorism, however hateful its methods, might advance the national interest, there is I believe a growing realisation of the irremediable harm which terrorism and the terrorist outlook must inevitably inflict upon the Province and its people if it is allowed to persist. I welcome the steps taken by those who attended the anti-terrorist Conference, and others who think with them, to redouble their efforts. The Press too can help greatly, and it would be ungracious not to acknowledge the change of tone that has become apparent in certain organs of the Press. In regard to the Press I would say that Government cannot and do not expect that all criticism should be hushed when dissatisfaction is felt with official action. Even a Government of archangels could not address themselves to the problems which confront the Government of Bengal to-day without giving some occasion for dissatisfaction. What we do ask and expect is that the manner in which criticism is expressed should be studied by the critic in relation to its possible effect in encouraging terrorist activity.

But public opinion requires something to feed upon,



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and I have always felt that a Government which is compelled to resort to severe measures, cannot expect to hold the sympathy of the public unless it is constantly solicitous, in a practical way, for the amelioration of the conditions of the people entrusted to its charge.



III

RESTORATION¹

MY purpose to-day is to speak to you on one subject alone, the future of the detenus. When I last addressed the Legislative Council, I pointed out that though there had been a steady improvement in the terrorist situation, the terrorists had not abandoned their aims, and that it was only by the exercise of constant vigilance that the improvement was being maintained. I also indicated that when Government were satisfied that recruiting activity and revolutionary plotting had abated to such an extent that relaxation of pressure would not immediately be followed by renewed activity, they would be in a position to put forward measures of appeasement.

During the six months which have since elapsed, the situation has been fairly steady. Though evidence has been received of persistent terrorist activity, no major outrage has occurred, and public opinion has been set steadily against terrorist activity. In these circumstances, though the need for continued vigilance remains as great as ever, Government feel that the risk involved in ameliorative measures may be justifiably undertaken, subject to proper safeguards.

I have noticed in certain quarters a disposition, in recent months, to suggest that detenus are not terrorists

¹ Speech at the Bengal Legislative Council, 28th August, 1935.



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because they have not been convicted in open trial, and therefore they all ought to be released. I can only think that that argument is advanced, and that solution advocated, either by persons in the inner counsels of terrorism, whose views are not entitled to weight, or by well-meaning persons necessarily ignorant of the ramifications and activities of terrorist organisations, and who are, therefore, not in a good position to form a competent opinion. With the experience of two successive periods of terrorist activity behind them, Government could never agree to a general release of detenus. On the previous occasions when terrorism had been brought under control, detenus who were held in custody as a preventive measure were set at large. Within a short time of their release, terrorist activity broke out again, and it was found that it was the released detenus who had been most active in reviving the movement. With those lessons before them Government cannot be expected to again pursue a course which has twice been proved a mistake. They cannot gamble with the lives of their officers or the safety of the State, or take unnecessary and undue risks.

That does not mean that nothing is to be done to enable detenus to become useful members of society. I have long recognized that to hold persons in detention indefinitely, with no prospect of the amelioration of their condition, is no solution of the terrorist problem. I believe that while there is, among the detenus, a certain number of irreconcilables, there is on the other hand a large number who have been led astray by a perverted idealism. But they can be made to see the error of their ways and become useful citizens. I consider that the State should recognize that it is incumbent upon it to do what it can to give such men a chance of turning their energies and their abilities into useful channels. Merely



to set them loose on the country without definite evidence of their reformation would be to take an undue and unjustifiable risk both to society and to the detenus themselves, many of whom would undoubtedly again fall an easy prey to the terrorist recruiter. An alternative solution has, to be found which will afford reasonable security to society by reducing to a minimum the risk of early relapse.

Government have, after long and careful deliberation, decided upon giving to carefully selected detenus, at the expense of the State, a training which will enable them to assist in developing the natural resources of the country both to their own profit and to the advantage of the country at large. It is proposed to train them in those forms of agriculture—fruit-farming, kitchen gardening and the like—in which there is scope for the intelligence and organizing power of the *bhadralog* youth, and which have hitherto been neglected. On the industrial side training will be given in the manufacture of articles which it is expected will yield a fair profit and at the same time help to make the province self-sufficient. Both on the agricultural and on the industrial side an endeavour will be made in a practical way to show the advantages of co-operative methods, and if circumstances are favourable, it may be possible to arrange for a full course of co-operative training with or without a supplementary training in the application of co-operative methods to various forms of agriculture or industry. The experiments proposed are necessarily tentative, and their development will have to be guided by the experience gained in their working. Their success or failure will depend primarily upon the extent to which the detenus are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them. It will be necessary, therefore, to

select the detenus with great care. The first opportunity will be given to those who have the necessary aptitude and have satisfied Government that they do honestly intend to discard the path of terrorism for a way of life profitable to themselves and useful to the community. Provision will be made, in the first instance, for the training of a few hundred only, and during their training they will have to be kept under some form of restraint. At the end of the period of training they will be released, provided their conduct and general attitude have been found to be satisfactory. As soon as it is found that the experiments give definite promise of success, their scope will be expanded to embrace other suitable forms of agriculture and industry, and, in the efforts so made, to open up lines of useful activity, it may be expected that much valuable light will be thrown on the general problems of unemployment which are so much in the minds of all of us, so that good to the province as a whole may ultimately come out of this great evil. The essence of the scheme is the making of a determined effort to solve the problem of rehabilitating the detenus in the normal life of the community, and incidentally to strike a blow at the problem of general unemployment. I wish particularly to emphasize this aspect of the matter, namely, that the benefits of the scheme, if it proves a success, will accrue to the community as a whole. Government will watch with interest the efforts on the part of individuals or institutions to follow up and apply the results obtained, so that this gigantic problem may be gradually brought to solution. They will welcome any co-operation that may be offered for making the attempt, on which they are now embarking, a success.

Fuller details of the scheme will be made public at as



early a date as may be practicable. But it must be realized that there is still a great deal of spade work to be done before the scheme can be launched, and suitable detenus must be forthcoming to take advantage of it. Considerable immediate expenditure will be involved, but if the scheme proves a success, large ultimate savings may be anticipated. I trust that the Council will not hesitate to grant necessary supplies for a purpose so full of potentialities for the good of the province.

I have had occasion before to ask for your assistance in stamping out this sinister and cankerous growth of terrorism. It is no longer necessary for me to emphasize what is nowadays so well recognized, that it is in the highest interests not of Government alone but of the people of Bengal, that the criminal activities of these misguided persons should be stopped. I ask you to-day, as leaders of opinion in Bengal, to lend your whole-hearted support, not in this Chamber alone, but outside, through the agency of the Press and the agency of public meetings, to the scheme on which Government are about to embark. You can help, by your general attitude, those misguided youths, whose imagination and patriotism have been perverted by designing persons, to get back to the broad highway which leads to prosperity for the province, and to honour for her once fair name which they have done so much to besmire. You can help them by making them feel that the success of the scheme will depend upon their conduct, their willingness to subject themselves to discipline, and their determination to learn what they are taught, and that they will forfeit any claim to your consideration if, having been given the opportunity, they misuse it. You will not be helping them if by your actions or your speech you encourage the belief that they can hope for relaxation or release until they have

satisfied Government that they have given up their terrorist propensities and mean to live as good citizens.

I HAD not intended to address you at this Durbar, but a¹ matter of public importance has recently been brought into prominence which, I feel, I ought not to pass over in silence on an occasion such as the present. Within the last two weeks two series of articles have appeared in the *Statesman*² dealing with a subject which is still of the greatest importance in this province—terrorism. Those articles treat the matter from opposite points of view, and may leave the general reader in a state of some bewilderment. I have no intention of joining at close quarters in a controversy where the last word in matters of detail must rest with the critics. But there are certain facts which I can fairly claim, are beyond the sphere of argument. There have also been suggestions for better methods of combating terrorism—suggestions which, though purporting to be based on special knowledge, seem to ignore what is actually being done.

The writer of the first series of articles, while conceding that terrorism has for the time being been brought under control, puts forward the thesis that the methods employed by the police and others concerned have been entirely misconceived. Now, it is thirty years since the Police in Bengal had first to deal with an organized terrorist conspiracy. On three occasions a great wave of organized crime has burst upon this unfortunate province, and on each occasion it has been broken, primarily by the determined, assiduous and courageous efforts of our

¹ Speech at the Durbar held at Dacca, 27th July, 1936.

² A Calcutta daily newspaper.



police. With that experience behind them, their conclusions are entitled to respect, and a critic who purports to speak with authority in challenging those conclusions cannot fairly complain if his authority is called in question.

It has been suggested that the police have learnt so little in thirty years that they cannot even distinguish between good and bad sources of information, and that on the testimony of informers who are either impressionable schoolboys or unemployed vagabonds, many men have been deprived of their liberty, and are presumably in prison or a detention camp. I say from personal investigation that such a suggestion is entirely fanciful. Not long ago, the Home Member of the Government of India¹ dealt with this matter in the Legislative Assembly. On information supplied by the Government of Bengal, for the accuracy of which I take full responsibility, he explained the extraordinary precautions taken to guard against any mistakes. I myself have examined the records of a large number of detenus, taken entirely at random from a nominal register, and I am satisfied that the possibility of mistake is exceedingly small. This is fully borne out by information voluntarily supplied by persons who have themselves in the past been detenus.

Quite distinct from detention in camp or prison are those milder forms of restriction imposed by District Officers on persons under the age of twenty-one, as authorized by the Legislature two years ago. In such cases I am prepared to admit that the possibility of a mistake is greater ; but that is inevitable in the nature of the case. As explained in the Council at the time, the

¹ Sir Henry Craik, K.C.S.I., C.S.I., I.C.S., Home Member, Governor General's Executive Council 1934-38 ; Governor of the Punjab since 1938.

object of those provisions of 1934 was reclamation, without recourse to the more drastic action which up till then had been the only method of employing the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act. If that object of reclamation is to be attained, action must be taken at an early stage when a youth first shows signs of going astray. The first symptoms of a disease are obviously more difficult to diagnose accurately than its full manifestations. But such action is normally taken, as the Act requires, in consultation with parents and guardians, and the consequences of a mistake, if one is made, can easily be set right. Such action is fundamentally different from detention in the drastic sense of the word, and criticism that fails to distinguish between the two cases is neither informed nor constructive.

The opinion of course remains that all this repression, however successful it may be for the time being—and we claim without hesitation that the “repressive” measures adopted by Government have fully succeeded in bringing the terrorist menace under control—can never provide a radical cure. But here let us beware of false sentiment. “All law”,—that is, of course, all criminal law—“is repression, and when there is a revolt it is folly to imagine that the ordinary processes of the law can be carried out.” These words—save for an explanation of their context—are not mine. They are words of a great statesman—a great Liberal statesman of international reputation—uttered only a few weeks ago in the House of Commons with reference not to India, but to a situation that has arisen elsewhere. I respectfully associate myself with his pronouncement, and may I add that all civic liberty is based upon respect for law or enforcement of law. Law, and if necessary emergency law, has to be enforced with vigour and determination against those who would



destroy liberty, if the civil rights of those who would go in peace on their lawful occasions are to be preserved.

I would, however, be the last to claim that what is called repression is the end of the matter. Other remedies must be sought—but not fancy remedies. There has been a suggestion that we should hold up the budding terrorists to contempt by publishing nominal lists with particulars of their activities. I appreciate the object of the suggestion but the means are a matter of experience. The object underlying it is already being achieved far better, and with less risk of injustice, by the system of identity cards which is in force in one or two areas where subversive activity has been most intense. It has also been held that Government should set up a special organisation for propaganda and conciliation independent of the agencies normally at work. This, too, experience must reject. The task of Government cannot be divided up in this way. An independent official agency for conciliation would be just as objectionable in its own way as an independent secret police. I repeat, however, that Government have a duty to attack this great evil at its very root. What have we in fact done towards that end? A year ago, I foreshadowed the steps to be taken to give to such among the detenus as were not found completely irreconcilable, an opportunity by training in industry or agriculture, of becoming useful citizens. That scheme has been in operation since the early part of this year with results that are definitely encouraging. It is being steadily developed.

I have already referred to the provisions of laws passed in 1934, which were meant for the protection and reclamation of young men found to be toying with terrorist ideas without as yet having become deeply involved. Full use has been made by district officers of their powers

under the Act. I know that they, and other officers associated with them in their task, are continually in touch with parents and guardians. There may well be individual instances where the parties have nevertheless felt themselves aggrieved. For that matter, I have known of cases where the parents themselves have lived to regret that they knew less than the police and the district officers did about what was really happening to their children. But any general assertion, by whomsoever made, that officers of Government do not care to seek non-official co-operation in this matter, is neither informed nor helpful criticism proper to the field of genuine controversy.

Apart from these measures directed specifically at the reclamation and protection of those who have come in a greater or less degree under terrorist influence, Government have been making determined efforts to create conditions unfavourable to the spread of the terrorist contagion. In particular, they have given the full weight of their support to stimulating, co-ordinating and assisting with funds a variety of measures which may all be broadly classified under the term "rural reconstruction", such as it had formerly been the practice to leave to the personal choice and initiative of individual officers in the districts. The importance of this work has long been recognized, but the efforts of individual officers in the past have received far too little publicity and support to ensure their continuity. Among that group of officers who were murdered in the darkest days of terrorism four or five years ago, because they would not shrink from doing thier duty and died for Bengal in the truest sense of the words, were to be found great souls who deplored above all the fact that the energies they wanted to devote to the uplift of the country had to



be utilized with the same zeal to the task of preventing its disintegration. They took no pleasure in repressive activities, and looked forward eagerly to the time when they might overcome the forces of destruction and turn their resources once again to constructive work. I rejoice that Government has now appreciated, as part of its continuing responsibilities, the constructive work in districts that made so strong an appeal to these officers. They believed that once the forces of organized disorder had been broken, the endeavours of the people for their own uplift would in due time produce a healthier and more hopeful environment in which terrorism could no longer survive.

But the value of the work goes far beyond even the eradication of terrorism. If there were no terrorist conspiracy nor any other movement subversive of ordered government, it would still be worth doing for its own sake. He was a wise man, I think, who observed a long time ago, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge"¹. Does not that observation contain an explanation of much that has gone amiss in Bengal during the last thirty years? If you think it does, you will agree with me that it behoves us all to do everything in our power to infuse more sweetness into the lives of the country people and particularly the young folk.

¹ Old Testament, Jer. XXXI. 29.



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IV LAW AND ORDER¹

FOR the past twelve years I have been closely associated with the work of some of the great police forces of the Empire—among them the Royal Irish Constabulary, in its day probably the finest Force of its kind that the world has ever known, and the Metropolitan Police renowned everywhere for fairness, restraint and tactful, as well as sympathetic, handling of difficult situations. The Indian Police share the traditions of those older Forces, and I am happy to be associated in Bengal with a Force which, I am sure, will ever strive to observe those high traditions.

You have to carry out your duties under exceptionally difficult conditions. Not only are you called upon to deal with an exceptional volume of ordinary crime such as is always rampant in times of economic depression, but you are confronted with a widespread and deeply-rooted political conspiracy whose leaders rely upon outrage on life and property for the attainment of their ends.

The heads of your Force assure me—and I readily accept their assurances, confirmed as they are by the results of my own observation—that your steadfastness and loyalty leave nothing to be desired. For that, as Head of the Provincial Government, I thank you.

¹ Speech at the Police Parade, Dacca, 27th July, 1932.



It is only to be expected, considering the conditions under which you now have to work, that insidious attempts should be made from time to time to blacken your reputation, and thereby undermine your self-respect and hamper you in your work. In certain cases—you will know what I have in mind without my being more specific—members of the Force have been accused of improper conduct. I always try to ensure that such accusations are carefully and thoroughly investigated, not by the methods of public enquiry which, unfortunately lend themselves only too readily to mischievous propaganda and are apt to be exploited for that purpose, but by methods equally effective. I have satisfied myself that in many cases such charges have been made without their having any solid foundation. You will not make the mistake of resenting the necessity for such enquiries even when you know beforehand that you have nothing with which to reproach yourselves. Your good name should be more precious to you than to anyone else.

In a force of 30,000 men, it is not to be expected that cases may not from time to time arise where powers have been exceeded or practices that are indefensible have been indulged in. It is well-known that there have been instances in Bengal, happily very few in number, where unfortunately members of the force, under stress of grave and, perhaps, intolerable provocation, have torn asunder the bonds of restraint and committed acts that were incompatible with their position as guardians of the law and of good order. In such cases, Government may act sympathetically, bearing in mind the provocation, but they must act firmly. For a Force primarily responsible for carrying out the law, it must always be indefensible to take the law into its own



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hands. More than that, such lapses, if condoned, would quickly undermine and destroy the discipline and the morale of the Force. Nothing in the nature of reprisals will ever be tolerated so long as I am associated with the Government of this Province. On the other hand, when you are wrongly and most unfairly attacked, you will be protected and supported in every possible way.

I make these observations, not because I entertain any doubt of your steadiness, loyalty and sense of discipline, but because I can understand the strain to which you are constantly subjected. I am very jealous of your good name, and wish you to be the same, so that you may continue to merit here in Bengal the high tribute paid recently in London by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales¹ to the Police Forces of India at a dinner presided over by a very distinguished and admirable member of the Police Service in Bengal, Sir Charles Tegart.²

DURING the one year that has elapsed since I last addressed³ you on parade, Calcutta has lacked neither forces making for disorder nor occasions when the peace of the City was threatened. That no major disturbances have occurred to mar the record of the year, and that the citizens of Calcutta—merchants, traders, clerks and those more humble workers whose business lies in the thoroughfares of the City—have been able to pursue their daily round in peace and security, is at once a measure

¹ Now Duke of Windsor.

² Formerly Police Commissioner, Calcutta, and subsequently a member of the India Council, London.

³ Speech at the Police Parade, Calcutta, 14th August, 1933.



of your success and a tribute to your vigilance and efficiency.

Once again, your principal anxiety has been that arising from the existence of a movement to subvert the Government and to terrorise the people of this Province, and of India, by crimes of violence and by force of arms. That movement attained its peak about this time last year. That we have now got the measure of it, is due to co-ordination of effort over a wide field. The spear-head of our attack has been provided by the Bengal Intelligence Branch and the Special Branch of the Calcutta Police. If the period with which I am now dealing opened with a dastardly attack on Sir Alfred Watson, to be shortly followed by another, I am tempted to believe that these two outrages,—unsuccessful, as they fortunately were, and ably and expeditiously investigated, may prove to have been the turning point of the whole campaign against terrorism in this Province. The Special Branch have to their credit a long list of cases in which arms and explosives have been recovered, and their possessors have been brought to justice. There can be no question that this and other timely arrests, effected often in circumstances of great personal danger to the officers concerned, have served time and again to forestall outrages for which plans were nearly matured. The thanks of Government, and of the people of this city, are due to the officers and men of the Special Branch for the courage and devotion to duty by which they have won their recent successes. With the Special Branch I would link the Special Detective Staff of the Port Police, who have shared in the campaign against illicit trade in fire-arms and have, I might add, a fine record of success in the prevention and detection of traffic in illicit drugs. Less exacting than in the previous year,

but calling always for vigilance and careful handling, has been the task of controlling activities arising from the Civil Disobedience Movement. Its main manifestation took the form of an attempt to hold the annual Congress Session in this city in April last. The burden of dealing with the situation to which that attempt gave rise, fell mainly on the Calcutta Police,—all branches, I believe, being called upon to play their part. I am fully aware of the labour and the strain to which this provocative demonstration subjected you. The thanks of the Government of India have already been conveyed to you for the manner in which a difficult situation was handled. As it was my duty to carefully go into the whole matter, I aver that the restraint and sense of discipline evinced on that occasion were worthy of the highest traditions of the Force.

In the course of a necessarily brief review, there is only one other aspect of your activities to which I will refer. The organisation last year of eight new Calcutta Police divisions, in addition to the two already existing, was a feature of the annual report of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in this Province. As I remarked at the annual meeting of the Association, a policeman, if he is at all worthy of the uniform he wears, is much more likely to face the responsibility of applying his first-aid training promptly when occasion arises, than the casual passer-by would be, and I added that in the police forces with which I had been connected in Europe¹, first-aid training was made a prominent feature, and its value was constantly being demonstrated. I saw something of the Police divisions on parade at the annual competition last cold weather, and I was very favourably impressed. I am not in the least surprised to learn that within

¹ Royal Irish Constabulary.



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the past nine months two acknowledged authorities, Dr. W. C. Benthall and Sir David Petrie, have expressed the opinion that the Calcutta Police Divisions are the smartest and most efficient in India. That, I am sure, was well-merited praise, and that it was earned so soon after the organisation of the new divisions reflects the highest credit on officers and rank and file alike.



V

POLICE AND PUBLIC¹

THE attendance of a contingent from the Fire Brigade is another welcome feature of this parade. The Police and the Fire Brigade alike are engaged in constant vigilance and activity against enemies of organized society—but whereas the work of the one is often most appreciated when it is most spectacular, much of the best work of the Police is quietly done and attracts very little attention.

Fire is an enemy that every one recognizes, and those who fight it deservedly earn the thanks of the community. It is the lot of the Police that the dangers to society against which they are pitted should be often less obvious and less easily recognized—but the dangers are there for all that, and when they have been met without spectacular display of activity, it is none the less a token of good service unobtrusively rendered.

There have, of course, been cases of punishment—sometimes severe—which nobody takes pleasure in inflicting, but those who fail to uphold the good name of the force can expect no false sympathy from their comrades.

The year has witnessed an event of outstanding importance of which both the Calcutta Police and the public will long preserve the happiest memories—I refer

¹ Speech at the Police Parade, Calcutta, 9th Nov., 1935.



to the Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Not even in London itself, which claims pride of place for its police force among the cities of the world,—not even in London itself were the arduous duties of the police discharged with greater good humour and success : I recall with the greatest pleasure the spontaneous good feeling evinced by the public of Calcutta, and the many tributes that were paid to the conduct of the police on that occasion. We cannot always be in holiday mood, and there are times when unpleasant duties have to be done—but I trust that the memory and example of that occasion will long remain as an inspiration both to the force and to those for whose co-operation they look.

I am glad to observe that during the year definite steps have been taken to obtain the greater co-operation of the public in dealing with the problems of traffic in Calcutta. Traffic in this city presents many knotty problems—some of which call for more far-reaching solutions than can be applied by the man on point duty—but the actual control of traffic on the road is an activity which affects the safety, convenience and good temper of every road user. I wish you every success in dealing with your part of the problem, and assure you that Government will give the most careful consideration to any proposals designed to deal with those aspects of it which are beyond your immediate control.

I have observed with satisfaction, which may be shared by every taxpayer, the continued rise in the educational standard of recruits to the force, and in particular, that every man recruited during the last year was literate and of good physique.

The policing of the second city of the Empire is a task that calls for first rate material and will continue no less to do so in the future. If the experience of other



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countries is any guide, the success of representative Government will be closely bound up with the maintenance in its police forces of a high standard of independence, intelligence and fearlessness in securing respect for the law. To whatever degree the Government of the day may control policy, it is to the responsible heads of their police forces that they must look to secure and preserve the integrity and discipline of all ranks under their charge. I am sure that the Governments of the future will not be slow to follow this, and the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police and his officers will be the heavier in consequence ; but I believe that they will rise to the full height of the occasion and win the confidence and respect of those whom they are to serve.

I AM glad to observe in the year 1935 a decrease of¹ nearly five per cent in the totals of true reported crimes against property—a decrease that includes both dacoity and burglary. The control of such crimes is rightly accepted as one of the main standards by which the work of a Police force is judged. You may fairly claim that your pressure upon the criminal has been in no way relaxed, and that the ground gained during 1934 has been well maintained. This represents a very great advance on the position during the disordered years of 1931 and 1932, and it is good to see that with the fall in the number of crimes there has been a substantial increase in the number of persons convicted. I know, however, that your Inspector-General is not content with the situation especially as regards dacoity. I have been

¹ Speech at the Police Parade, Dacca, 28th July, 1936.



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interested to see an analysis that he has made of these crimes. It appears that out of 1,242 dacoities committed in 1935 some 300 can be ascribed to economic reasons and 590 to organized gangs, against whom 89 convictions have been secured. The fact remains, however, that there is still a long way to go before you get dacoities down to the level of pre-war days. It is true that if allowance is made for those cases which can be ascribed to the abnormal economic conditions as continued to operate last year, the cases due to sheer criminality are comparable in number to those that occurred in the comparatively peaceful and prosperous years about 1927; but neither you nor I can rest content with that. The field of operations of the dacoit extends to the whole population, especially the rural ones of the province. This fact tends to make the mischief less impressive than it would be if the whole volume of crimes of this nature were concentrated in a particular area or directed against a particular and limited class of the community. If that were so, even the present improved situation could well be described as one of emergency. But dacoity is a standing threat, not an emergent one—so much so that at least on a certain scale it has come to be regarded as a normal feature in the life of India. That is a position we should decline to accept with resignation. It calls either for the application of new methods or for the intensification of those among the existing ones that have been proved by experience to be most likely to succeed.

The methods upon which the greatest stress has been laid, are improvement in the rural police and closer co-operation both with the public and other local officers of Government. The first of these two proposals involves financial considerations upon which I am not in a position

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4 to pronounce. The latter is one which I have formerly stressed and have no hesitation in stressing again. The staff of the mofussil *thanas*¹ is not numerous enough to prevent such crimes unaided. Their primary duties are to investigate crimes committed—to keep watch as far as possible on the more notorious bad characters, and by systematic enquiry and record to locate and deal with the plague spots of crime in their areas. How much they can achieve over and above these duties depends on the help they receive from the police and upon the possibility of influencing public support in the prevention and suppression of crime. It is for this reason that I again speak on the need for mutual co-operation.

5 I do not suggest, for example, that Presidents of Union Boards² should attempt to assume responsibility for the investigation of crime—far from it—nor that the Sub-Inspector should intrude himself into the working of village self-government. But I do say without hesitation that if co-operation between the two is to be effective, each must be prepared to appreciate the difficulties of the other, and do his part in his own sphere to assist each other. In the nature of things, I am afraid it must often appear that the co-operation is one sided, and that it is the President who has to make the more tangible contribution to the joint enterprise. He is in direct charge of the *chaukidari* Police, whose services are essential for the suppression of crime. The police officer, however wide his interests and sympathies, has a specialized duty to perform, and cannot effectively discharge it unless the resources of the police are placed at his disposal. If he succeeds in effecting a reduction of crime, the results are by no means so obvious in the daily routine

1 Indian Police Stations.

2 Vide page 51.



of life as is the task of the President in paying the *chaukidars*¹, keeping them up to the mark, and seeing that their services are at the disposal of the *daroga*² whenever they are required.

I am, however convinced that the police officer who can, in addition to his allotted work, take an active and sympathetic interest in the lives and doings of the people of his area will, if only by the greater friendliness and mutual understanding thus promoted, greatly facilitate and enhance the value of his task. I regard the continually rising standard of education in the police force as a factor of great importance, and one to be taken full advantage of from this point of view.

I also find in this report that there has been, in response to my previous appeals, a marked increase in the number of occasions on which the *thana* and supervising officers of the police, the local officers of Government and Presidents of Union Boards have met together informally to discuss their common interests. In the course of talks that I have had with Officers in the districts, I have learnt with pleasure of instances where police officers of high rank have been able to find the time to come into closer personal contact with people in the rural areas, not only for the purpose of investigating crime, but for the wider purpose of knowing the country and establishing personal relations with the people. I understand that it is not easy. You cannot go back to the spacious days of the past, when officers had the time to tour in a leisurely fashion without finding themselves over-burdened with work when they got back to their headquarters. Whatever modifications in routine may or may not be possible to lighten the burden of head-

¹ Rural policemen.

² A Sub-Inspector of Police.

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quarters work, I am afraid that the officer who tours extensively under modern conditions will only be able to do so at the cost of burning the midnight oil when he gets back. But if, as I believe the resultant increase in personal contact will eventually react towards the better organisation of the public against serious crime, the extra labour will in due course bring its own reward.

Another subject of no less significance is that of crimes against women. So far as statistics go—and as I have said, they are not necessarily a reliable guide in this matter—the last year, as compared with 1934, shows a fall of nearly 30 per cent in such crimes of the more serious class, but a rise of 7 per cent in those of the less flagrant variety. I refer to this subject again, particularly because in the course of the present year the legislature has taken steps to strengthen the hands of the executive in dealing with crimes of this nature. It is too early yet to foresee how far this enactment will operate to reduce the incidence of these crimes. I would, however, say a word with regard to the suggestion that has sometimes been made to the effect that this is a communal question. Figures have been furnished to show that women of both the major communities stand equally in need of protection. There will, doubtless, be many cases, and perhaps a majority where the stringent provisions of the new law may not be called into force. The punishment of whipping, which in certain instances is now authorized, was not directed against offences relating to women in general, but solely against specific offences against women which may involve the elements of concerted brutality or the commercial exploitation of vice. Where those features are present, Government are entitled to expect that right-minded men, of whatever community, will support the



infliction of a punishment which is considered to be an effective deterrent.

I have confined myself to these two main points because I hope that the maintenance of all necessary measures against terrorism, coupled with the active measures of a constructive nature which Government and its officers are pursuing, may bring us nearer the time when the police may be left free to devote themselves without abnormal interference, to the fight that must always continue against the perennial enemies of ordered society.

I AM addressing you to-day for the last time as the¹ Governor of Bengal and for the first time under constitutional conditions² differing radically from those which prevailed a year ago. The Governor of a Province retains and will continue to retain a special relationship to the services of the Crown, and that relationship may well render it appropriate for him to address them personally on occasions of this kind and upon matters with which, as the representative of the King-Emperor, he is particularly concerned. But for the administration of the police, for their efficiency and welfare, the Minister in charge of the Home Department has a responsibility more direct and immediate than that of the Governor—a responsibility not to be whittled down or blurred, and less still, save in circumstances which are far from our contemplation, to be superseded.

It is Sir Nazimuddin³ therefore whom you might well

¹ Speech at the Police Parade, Dacca, 13th July, 1937.

² After the inauguration of the Government of India Act, 1935.

³ Minister in Charge, Home Department, Bengal.

expect to review the progress and achievements of the force under his charge, and to make such pronouncements as he might deem appropriate as to the line of policy and administration which, with the support of his colleagues, he might intend to follow in the future. Appreciating as I do the manner in which he has stood aside and invited me to take this last opportunity of addressing you, I do not propose to trench on matters which I regard as more appropriate for Ministers to deal with. I shall accordingly confine myself, so far as concerns the administration of the force and its work, to matters of decided policy in which under the old regime I have had a personal and actual responsibility.

I cannot, while speaking of administrative matters, omit mention of one other important question, namely, the subject of relationship of the police with the public. It must be a source of general gratification to know that in many districts, efforts to secure greater co-operation and understanding between police officers and Union Boards have borne fruit. I spoke of this subject last year and have been particularly gratified to observe this continued improvement. It has been shown in practice that active and sympathetic interest on the part of police officers in matters of local welfare has, in fact, resulted in better mutual understanding and greater co-operation between them and the local bodies, both in the improvement of the countryside and in their common efforts against crime. That much still remains to be done is clear from the heavy incidence of dacoity in this Province. It is true that the past year shows an improvement on its predecessor in a smaller number of dacoities and a considerably larger number of Village Defence parties. But nothing but the closest and most active co-operation between the *thana* police and the authorities



in charge of the rural police can achieve further progress in protecting the villages against this constant peril. For my part, I feel sure that the way of co-operation and mutual understanding is the only road to success.

I would now like to speak to you more particularly about a matter to which I have already referred—the relationship between myself as Governor and you as servants of the Crown. I have said that that relationship is a special one. I would go further and say that to my mind it constitutes an asset of the very greatest value to the success of responsible Government. In India, as in England, the ties that unite the Crown and the services are as real as they are intangible. I venture to say that there is no servant of the State in India, however humble, who would not stand with pride before his Sovereign in the consciousness of work well done. There is no servant of the State, however remiss or unworthy, who has not at some time been reminded of his duty by remembrance of the loyalty that he owes to his King.

What I wish to impress on you is that the new order of things involves no conflict of loyalties, for the whole authority of the Crown stands behind its constitutional advisers acting in accordance with law. You are aware that the Governor has been charged with a special responsibility in respect of the public services—but I have already tried to make it clear that such a responsibility on his part does not exclude the responsibility of the Minister. It is to the Minister that the services committed to his charge should look for their guidance, welfare and protection, and it is through him, if need be, that the personal consideration of the Governor is to be invoked. On that foundation only can rest the mutual confidence between the Crown, the advisers



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and the services which is an indispensable condition of ordered and progressive Government.

It is that harmony of loyalties which constitutes one of the greatest gifts that the political experiences of Britain has been able to contribute to responsible and constitutional Government. To preserve that tradition of harmony in its integrity is a trust shared by myself as the representative of the King-Emperor in this Province, and my Ministers as his constitutional advisers in all matters committed to their charge. It is a trust which, I believe, both they and I and our successors on both sides, will be proud to discharge in partnership.

THE city of Calcutta has reason to congratulate itself¹ and its police force on the continued absence, since I last addressed this parade, of outbreaks of serious crime or disorder. No one is more happy than myself to record the fact that in spite of occasions when communal feelings were deeply stirred, the city has been free from any serious manifestation of that most deplorable form of disturbance. For this, thanks are due not only to the police but to many individuals of influence and goodwill among the communities themselves, and I gratefully acknowledge their services; but such men will be the first to agree with me that the existence of an efficient and impartial police force is the surest guarantee of their efforts being supported.

There is no big city in the world that does not contain its element of hooligans and habitual criminals, and Calcutta is no exception. It is interesting to see that during the year 1935 no fewer than 59 externed

¹ Speech at the Police Parade, Calcutta, 14th Nov. 1936.



goondas¹ were arrested after return to the city, and 57 of them were convicted by the courts. The particular watch on smuggling of arms resulted in ten smugglers being dealt with, and incidentally in the discovery in concealment of a certain number of the hooligans to whom I have just referred. It takes courage and skill to tackle some of these gentry, and society has reason to be grateful to the men who track them down and bring them within the arm of the law.

In a city of the size of Calcutta, where the most primitive and the most modern forms of transport compete for the roads, traffic problems go far beyond the scope of technical difficulty. Progress is apt to be met by the dead weight of conservatism, and attempts to advance too rapidly are apt to defeat themselves by the resentment that they may arouse. I have been glad to hear of the valuable assistance rendered by the Advisory Committee in dealing with these and other problems, which so greatly concern the general safety and convenience of every day life.

I have noticed in the report of the Commissioner for the year 1935 the brief statement that during that year over 9,800 beggars were arrested in Calcutta, of whom all but an insignificant proportion were discharged by the police or the courts—to resume, of course, their habitual occupation. So far as the police are concerned, I feel that this is all that can at present be done, but the situation is not one that does credit to a great city. It is a problem that has attracted the attention of progressive and liberal-minded men and women for several years, and can only be solved by a concerted effort with the essential co-operation of the civic authorities. As I have said on a previous occasion, it is a problem that can never

¹ Hooligans.



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be solved by passing by on the other side of the road, and I venture to express the hope that the civic authorities, to whom this matter has been referred by my Government, will face the question in a spirit of realism and co-operation. Any practical steps that can be taken to deal with this evil will lighten a burden on the public no less than on the police.



VI

PUBLIC BODIES¹

IT is a very great pleasure to me to meet the representatives of a community² which has taken so prominent a part in the public life of the province and to receive from them an address couched in such cordial and friendly terms. I must thank you, for your assurance of unswerving loyalty to the Crown, and on my own behalf, for the generous tone in which you have referred to me. I trust that with the help and co-operation you have promised me, I may not only be able to deserve your compliments, but also be justified in the optimism expressed by you.

I observe that you have placed in the forefront a reference to an enactment which you evidently regard as the bulwark of your position as the landed aristocracy of Bengal,—I mean, the Permanent Settlement of 1793. As I said the other day the view my Government take, —and it is a view which has been recently endorsed by His Excellency the Viceroy³,—is that so long as land revenue remains a “reserved subject” and the Permanent

¹ Reply to the Address presented by the British Indian Association, Calcutta, 9th April, 1932.

² The British Indian Association was established in 1851 by a group of landlords including Raja Radhakanto Dev Bahadur, who was its first President.

³ Lord Willingdon.

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Settlement is not proved to be inimical to the best interests of the State, Government would not regard with approval any attempt to interfere with a statutory arrangement sanctioned by the lapse of years and inextricably bound up with economic conditions and judicial practice in Bengal.

You have also referred to your interest in the constitutional problems with which we are called upon to deal in connection with the forthcoming reforms, and you urge that in the future constitution the landholders should be secured "a fair share" in the administrative responsibilities of the country. This, in your opinion, can be best attained by guaranteeing them adequate representation in the legislatures. I hope you will not expect me, a newcomer to this country, to express any opinion on this difficult question. You know, possibly better than I do, that the attitude of the Government towards the retention of special constituencies for the landlords has been, to say the least, sympathetic. Whether a request for proportionately larger special preference than you already enjoy, can be reconciled with the modern conception of democratic franchise, is hardly for me to say. There are factors in Indian conditions which may call, particularly at the outset, for a stronger return of the more stable elements. But as regards special consideration, you are at all events in the strong position of having enjoyed it continuously since the Reforms of 1909¹. In any case, I should confidently hope that the weight which your views will carry in the counsels of the province will never be measured solely by the numerical strength.

Similarly, as regards your desire that in the future constitution of this province, provision should be made for a second chamber,—it is impossible for me to say

¹ The Morley-Minto Reforms, 1909.



anything except that I think that there are weighty reasons to be urged in favour of such a provision.

I am glad to learn that the efforts of Government to help the landlords in the trough of the economic depression through which we are passing, have been appreciated. Government are always ready to render such help as is reasonably possible—consistent with the necessity for realizing the land revenue without which it would be impossible to carry on the administration. And while, of course, individual cases must continue to be treated on their merits, my Government have no intention, so long as existing conditions persist, of going back on the policy to which you have referred in terms of appreciation. I hope that, as far as may be possible, you will enable your tenants to share in such advantageous treatment as you yourselves receive. Government are mindful, on their part, of the difficulties of the tenants, and they have tried, and will continue to try, to help them in the affected areas by the grant of agricultural loans and of gratuitous relief where necessary.

I AM very glad to have this early opportunity of meeting¹ the representatives of your long-established Association². I have listened with interest to the frank expression of your views, and I am grateful to you for your welcome and good wishes, because in conveying them you have brought to my notice certain things upon which you feel strongly. Most of them are matters on which opinions

¹ Reply to the Address presented by the Indian Association, Calcutta, 7th April, 1932.

² The Indian Association was established on 26th July, 1876, by the late Sir S. N. Banerjee.

are divided. One of them, at all events, is in a sense *sub judice*,—I mean the action of Government with regard to events¹ at Chittagong last August. I am sure, therefore, that if I avail myself of your invitation to hear, but to refrain from an immediate expression of opinion on some of the matters raised in your address, you will not construe my silence as an admission that your views on these important questions have either escaped my notice or been accepted in their entirety.

In the first place, you will allow me to say that I welcome the condemnation of violence and of disregard of the law with which your address opens. I am encouraged thereby to believe that though later in your address you have deemed it necessary to criticize the manner in which certain of the existing emergency powers are being exercised, you are in fact at one with Government not only as regards the declared policy of proceeding with the elaboration of the scheme of constitutional reform outlined at the Round Table Conferences² in London, but also as regards the necessity for maintaining a peaceful and ordered administration in India pending the introduction of the contemplated reforms. According to my personal experience, disorder and disrespect for law provide a very poor foundation upon which to build representative institutions.

I have noted with some surprise the terms in which you refer to the part played by permanent officials in shaping the policy of the administration. It is surely the case that for many years past the representatives of the people have taken a steadily increasing share in determining and carrying out the policy of the Local Government.

¹ Terrorist outrages.

² First Round Table Conference, 12th Nov., 1930; Second Round Table Conference, 5th Sept., 1931.



It may be freely admitted that, in Bengal as in many other parts of the world, the growth of public health services and education, the improvement of means of communication and transport, the development of the natural resources of the country and other nation-building activities, have not kept pace with the ideals of the more enlightened sections of the community. I feel sure, however, that Ministers are striving to do all that is possible within the limits of the means available, and that no effort will be spared in the development of a sound constructive policy. To all such efforts I will give the fullest personal support, recognizing that a policy which is mainly negative in its character cannot achieve the results which His Majesty's Government in England and in India have in view. In this connection I would beg you to keep constantly in mind this dual character of the policy of Government and, when you contemplate the action which it has been necessary to take under the specific threat of a general renewal of civil disobedience, not to lose sight of the constructive side of our programme in the sphere both of political and of administrative development. In opposing a movement which, unchecked, would speedily bring life and property into jeopardy and render impossible any form, not merely of constitutional advance but even of that ordered administration on the preservation of which commerce and the ordinary life of the people alike depend, Government are fighting the battle of all future Governments in India. But while the administration must at all costs be carried on, and while we intend to take every step necessary to achieve this essential condition, I would assure you that Government invite, and indeed earnestly seek, the help of all who wish to see orderly progress towards political advancement in India and the effective administration of



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vital services. The way is open both in constitutional matters and in everyday administration for constructive co-operation between Government on the one hand, and men and women of good-will on the other, whether acting as individuals or through unofficial organisations and agencies. I hope and believe that the Indian Association have chosen and will follow the path which leads so plainly in the direction of their own professed object—the attainment of political advancement and equality.

Once again, gentlemen, I thank you for your good wishes. I assure you that it will be my endeavour, while I am Governor under the present constitution, to fill the role which you have described as combining active participation in administration with political, racial and religious detachment. That, indeed, is required of me by my Oath of Office and by the Instrument of Instructions by which I am bound. You have, however, referred, I think by inadvertence, in the concluding paragraph of your address, to “my people,” meaning no doubt the European community. Gentlemen, while I am Governor here I have no peculiar ties. My people are in truth for the time being all those, of whatever class or creed, who dwell in this province of Bengal. I would ask you always to regard me, as I shall try always to regard myself, in that light.

I AM very grateful for the welcome which you have¹ accorded me on my arrival in Calcutta to assume charge of the office of Governor of this Presidency. I am

¹ Reply to the Address presented by the European Association, Calcutta, 9th April, 1932.



grateful also for the early opportunity which you have taken to inform me of the objects for which your Association¹ stands. I am particularly glad of the occasion which to-day's deputation affords me of meeting representatives of the mufussil branches of the Association. I must confess that since I reached Bengal I have only had time to see Calcutta, which is in many ways a European city in the East. I was astonished to find that nearly one-third of the European inhabitants of this province,—about 7,000 out of 23,000 Europeans at the last census²—are to be found in places outside the radius of this city.

You say that the members of your Association are deeply interested in the welfare of India. It could hardly be otherwise when so much that is now taken for granted in modern India owes its origin and development to the pioneers of the community whom you represent. In saying this I am thinking not only of the great commercial and industrial interests which you have created,—giving occupation and a means of livelihood to hundreds of thousands of the people of India—but to the traditions of honest dealing in public life and private and devoted service to the country in the social and economic and latterly, under the reforms, in the political sphere.

I can also appreciate that, with your inherited traditions and beliefs, you are anxious for the political development of this country towards those free self-governing institutions which in your own country you owe to the vision and enterprise of those who have gone before you. I agree with you in thinking that in this

¹ The European Association was established in 1883 by John Keswick.

² The census of 1931.

matter you have a great contribution to make to the advancement of this land, and that that contribution can best be made if there is close co-operation between the European and the Indian in the evolution of the peoples' institutions. Though admittedly by reason of your history and position you wield an influence out of all proportion to your numbers, you will not expect in any democratic constitution that may be introduced, to be able to sway the decision of the electorate or of the Government by the mere weight of your vote. It must be by the essential soundness of your views and objects that you will seek to commend them to those whose numbers will control the machine of government. This you have already done in the past, and I fully believe that in any future constitution that is likely to be framed for this province there will be not only every opportunity but, indeed, much occasion for the steadying influence which your representatives can bring to bear.

I thank you for the assurance that my Government can count upon your whole-hearted support in such measures as may from time to time be necessary for the maintenance of law and order. This is only what I might have expected from the community whom you represent. For proof of the genuineness of your professions in this matter, if proof were needed, I am told that I need not look further than to the several units of the Auxiliary Force in different parts of this Presidency whose numbers and efficiency are a sufficient indication of the keenness which inspires all ranks serving in them. Believe me, I do not underrate the public spirit both of those who offer themselves for such training and of the firms who allow them facilities to undergo it.

You say that your Association has hitherto been



regarded as one of the public bodies whose opinions have been consulted by Government on matters of public interest. I can promise you that I shall not make less use of you in this respect than my predecessors have done. In the problems which lie before us men of goodwill can play their part in helping to attain a solution in which no legitimate interest will be sacrificed but all interests will be subjugated to the common weal. Your members represent important interests of many kinds. They carry great responsibilities and command a great experience. From such a body assistance must always be welcome, and if it is tempered with the "frank, open and friendly criticism" to which you have referred, I trust you will always find me as accessible to hear the latter as I shall be grateful for the former.

I SHARE to a very large extent your views as to the¹ unfortunate reactions of political unrest upon the general life of the community. You tell me that the sympathy and moral support of important sections of the community are being alienated by what you term "repressive measures." Is it, however, really true as a general proposition that the measures to which you refer are the cause of interference with those who are content to go quietly about their ordinary business? Those who have committed themselves overtly or covertly to a policy of resistance to constituted authority are naturally incommoded. That was after all the purpose of the emergency measures. May it not be the case that the assertion that widespread inconvenience and hardship is

¹ Reply to the Address presented by the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 14th April, 1932.

being caused is due to the tacit but profoundly mistaken assumption that every one is politically minded? Even among professed politicians, I am inclined to take the view that many would serve their own interests and those of their country better by turning their thoughts into other channels. Politics apart, there are here in Bengal—a province comparable in size and population with the great countries of Europe—tasks to be performed in connection with education, public health, agriculture, industry, finance and many other services, which the Bengalees will soon be called upon to take completely under their own control. They are of such a nature as to offer full scope for the qualities of the most highly-gifted people for many generations to come. Opportunity knocks at the door. I hope the call will be heard.

I can wholeheartedly support your plea for closer contact and a better understanding between the different sections of the community. Anything I can do to further this end I will do gladly, and I shall always be accessible to receive suggestions put forward in a true spirit of helpfulness. In view of the most definite and solemn assurances which you have received as to the policy of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India in regard to the progress of constitutional reform, I find it rather difficult to see how co-operation with Government, either in that matter or in everyday administration, can be thought to be incompatible with self-respect.

You express the hope that my influence will always be thrown on the side of the genuine welfare of the people of this province. I say to you frankly that I know of no better test that can be applied to any item of Government policy than just this—will it benefit the masses



of the people? It was, I recall, the test which one very great administrator of my own race habitually applied.

THE interests of your Chamber are, no doubt, mainly¹ commercial and economic—the promotion and protection of your trade, commerce and industries—and merge into the political only where, as must at times unfortunately occur, economic and political considerations overlap. The intervention of the amateur—be he Government official or University Don—in the complicated and highly specialized sphere of commerce is, I know, viewed with suspicion by those who have devoted their lives to business. You will not, therefore, regard me any more than I should regard myself, as qualified to embark to-day on any disquisition on the “financial, economic and currency policy” of Government to which you have referred,—the less so as the matters on which you have there touched are primarily the concern of the Central Government. I shall content myself with noting, without admitting your opinion, that if the authorities concerned had followed a different financial policy, India would have been saved a good part of her travails. There are, I must assume, two sides to a proposition of that nature.

I am very fully in accord with your desire for a better understanding between Government and governed in Bengal. The machinery for this exists in the representative institutions which you already enjoy, and I have no reason to believe that as between my Government and the generality of the people of the province, there is other than a good understanding at present. I am,

¹ Reply to the Address presented by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 9th April, 1932.

certainly anxious to do all that lies in my power to maintain and improve that good relationship.

I am not quite sure that I understand what is meant by the phrase "the smoother course of the constitutional reforms" or to whom you allude when you refer to Indians of progressive and nationalistic outlook whose co-operation has not been availed of in the fashioning of the reforms. The co-operation of leaders of all parties was sought for the constitutional discussions in London. It was not on the initiative of Government that a train of events was set in motion which has since deprived them and the country of the assistance of some whose help they would very gladly have welcomed. As it is, His Majesty's Government and the Governments in India have lost no time, even since the Round Table Conference¹ dissolved, in setting up committees and taking other measures for the elaboration of the scheme of constitutional reform foreshadowed by the Prime Minister* in his speech of the 1st December last, and subsequently endorsed in the most solemn manner by both Houses of the British Parliament. The aim of British statesmanship, pronounced and repeated many times by Viceroys and Ministers within recent years, is to frame a constitution under which India will be able to advance to full responsibility for her own Government within the British Commonwealth of Nations. The problem upon which statesmen, Indian and British alike, are at present engaged is the determination of the steps by which that end can best be attained. When there is no unanimity on that subject among Indians themselves even in this province of Bengal, let alone in India as a whole, one cannot in fairness say that merely because no one has yet been able

¹ Vide page 190.

² The Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay Macdonald.



to produce a constitution acceptable to all elements of the population of India, it is reasonable to apprehend that anything that emerges from the present discussions will be merely "the shadow" and not the substance of what you would desire.

As regards the special powers which Government has thought fit to take to itself to meet the situation resulting from the attempt to renew the Civil Disobedience Movement in this country, I agree that they are, as they were meant to be, severe and comprehensive. Designed as they were, and introduced to meet an unprecedented emergency threatening the very basis of social and political order in India, they could not but be drastic in nature. I can understand that the issue of instruments placing such wide powers in the hands of the executive authorities might have occasioned a certain amount of apprehension at the time of publication, but I find it more difficult to believe that now, after three months' working of the Ordinances, there can be any excuse for fear among the vast mass of the law-abiding population. The Ordinances were planned and have been administered for the protection and benefit of the loyal sections of the community, and especially for those whose normal pursuits, commercial and financial, render them most vulnerable to any disturbance affecting the safety of property or the maintenance of credit. No one will be more happy than the executive authorities who have to administer them when a condition of affairs arises in which it will be possible to dispense with the Ordinances and revert to the ordinary law. But the initiative in this matter rests with those whose action has forced Government to assume these unusual powers. Meanwhile, I can only reiterate what has already been repeatedly stated on behalf of Government,



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that no innocent party has anything to fear from the Ordinances. On the contrary, they were formulated expressly to assure all peace-loving persons of the maintenance of their individual liberty and of freedom from the tyranny of social and economic molestation for political ends.

You have alluded to my connection with Irish affairs. I went there¹ with certain colleagues chosen from the Civil Service of the United Kingdom at a difficult time, as a matter of public duty. I will not attempt to comment either now or at any time upon some of the ill-informed and irresponsible suggestions that have been thrown out. It is fair, however, to recall that the last tasks to which my colleagues and I had to set our hands before returning to our normal duties were concerned with the inauguration, in close touch with the Irish leaders of a constitution under which the people of Ireland are free to work out their own salvation within the British Commonwealth of Nations. If, when my task in this great province is concluded, I can look back upon a comparable constructive effort, I shall personally be well content.

¹ As Joint Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1920.



CSL

VII

SELF-GOVERNMENT¹

TO one who has always been interested in the problems of local self-government, it is a very great pleasure indeed to come here to-day to attend the opening of your annual deliberations on the subject. I must thank you for inviting me to be present and for the cordial welcome which you have extended to me.

Though as yet I have had no opportunity to gain more than a paper acquaintance with Union Boards and their working, it is quite in the fitness of things that I should begin my closer acquaintance with the subject at Dacca. As I was assured in an address presented to me last week on the day of my arrival here, it was "in the villages of this district that the Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919² was first introduced as a measure of experiment." At all events Dacca was, I believe, the first district in the Province to complete the process of substituting the Union Board system for the old *Panchayeti*³ Union, and though since last year you have apparently formed two completely new *Panchayeti*

¹ Speech at the opening of the Union Board Conference, Dacca, 28th July, 1932.

² Vide page 51.

³ An ancient Indian System—a form of social sanction, wholly independent of the established Government—by which all local disputes were settled. The village headman, usually a Brahmin, gave the final verdict.

Unions in the *char*¹ areas of Vikrampur, you will not, I am sure, rest content until these two areas—provided they remain above the river—are brought under the new system. Looked at in this light, the formation of two new *Panchayeti* Unions is only a necessary step to the ultimate formation of two more Union Boards. I feel therefore, that I could hardly have come to a better centre than Dacca to inform myself about the working of Union Boards. This is a pleasure to which I must look forward another year.

Though I have not as yet seen the Union Boards at work, I have gathered enough to know that the Union Board, with its average area of 10 square miles and its population of from 6,000 to 8,000 souls, is now the recognized unit of local self-government in Bengal and the future medium for rural regeneration. In a land of villages such as India is, local self-government should begin in the village. Only so can we hope to attain that full development of village life which has been the advertized aim of political parties for years past, and which will be of more direct benefit to nine-tenths of the people of this land than any political or constitutional reform that the wit of man can devise. As far back as 1923 the late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee,² then Minister of Local Self-Government, wrote: "The Village Self-Government Act involves a definite recognition by the Government and Legislature of the failure of the attempt to meet the needs of Bengal villages by the agency of centralized institutions administering large areas and

¹ Riverside alluvial tracts.

² The late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress. Whilst Minister of Local Self-Government, Bengal, successfully piloted the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, which conferred virtual autonomy on the Calcutta Corporation.

of the fact that the only hope of meeting these needs lies in trusting the residents of villages to determine for themselves what they require and in giving them the opportunities to provide what they require in their own manner and for themselves." Accordingly the Act provided for the framing of their own budgets by the Union Boards which it set up. One part of the budget is what I may term "compulsory taxation" to meet the then already existing liability for the cost of the rural police. The other part is what I may call "voluntary or discretionary taxation," the proceeds of which in each Union Board are to go to the provision of those amenities of village life which the Board desired and could afford. As regards the "voluntary" part of the budget, it was made subject to the approval of a two-thirds majority of the Board. It is to me one of the most encouraging features of the reports which have been placed before me that, in spite of the provision requiring a two-thirds majority before any expenditure could be incurred on works of local improvement, there has been, until the present depression became acute, a steady increase in the sum and in the proportion of taxation levied under this head. It is also a striking testimony to the value of this portion of the Act that in the last two years two amending Bills have been introduced and passed, each of which sought to enlarge the scope of Union Board expenditure permissible under the "voluntary" section of the budget. Their passage clearly argues both a demand on the part of the people most affected, and a confidence on the part of the legislature that the local bodies could be safely entrusted with wider powers. I can, therefore, well believe that, as the gentlemen of the Dacca People's Association said to me in their address last week, "the villagers have acquired a

new sense of responsibility and self-sacrifice in the matter of primary education, rural sanitation, improved supply of drinking water and general uplift of the villages." There is clear evidence that in this district at all events, and in other districts where the system has been in force long enough to gain the confidence of the people, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee's faith has been justified. The people of the villages are determining their own requirements and providing them in their own manner and for themselves.

I congratulate the Union Boards of this district on the completion of another year's successful work. Especially do I congratulate those to whom it has been my pleasant task to distribute rewards and certificates this morning. I know that in more ways than one it has been a hard year—a critical year—for the Union Boards. The economic depression, especially in its effect on jute prices, has hit the country people hard, and though, thanks to bumper crops and low prices, there has been no general shortage of foodstuffs, there has been and is, a great scarcity of ready money to meet the demands of the cess, the rate and the rent collectors. In the circumstances, it is very gratifying to learn that collections of union rates in this district have been, on the whole, exceedingly satisfactory, and that expenditure on works of public utility in the year 1931-32 actually exceeded that of the previous year. I am told that though the institution of cases in the ordinary civil courts reflects by a large decrease the general economic depression, the number of cases instituted before Union Courts and Benches has increased. This transfer of judicial work from the regular courts to the Union courts, though due, perhaps, in some measure to financial stringency, is none the less welcome as indicating that the rural courts are winning the confidence of the people.



In other ways, too, it has been a difficult year for those who try to serve their fellow-countrymen through the Union Boards. To economic depression has been added organized propaganda directed towards the hampering and obstructing of the Boards and their members in their useful and beneficent work. Attacks of this character have been made with special determination in the Nawabganj area of the South Sadar subdivision, and in the Munshiganj subdivision of this district. It is a testimony to the courage of the members generally, and to the essential soundness of the institutions which have inspired such loyalty, that there has not been a single resignation by a President or member of a Board in this district during the past year. I do not under-estimate what this has meant to some of them, and on my way down the river I intend to meet some of these Presidents and express to them in person the Government's appreciation of the fortitude with which they have withstood threats and inducements to take the easy course of resignation.

This annual conference of yours appears to me to be an excellent institution, the more so, as I am told that you keep this machinery in existence all the year round, and that you derive considerable help and inspiration from the periodical visits of your energetic secretaries. In correspondence with them and still more at the conference itself, you have opportunities of pooling your varied experiences and renewing the faith that is in you. The conference affords a common platform on which men of different communities coming from different areas can co-operate for the common good. I should like to assure you that Government welcome the criticisms and suggestions for the improvement of the Act and its machinery which emanate from well-informed gatherings of this kind.

I AM very grateful to you for the cordial welcome¹ which you have extended to me to-day on the occasion of my first visit to your town and district. Calcutta, as we all know, is the capital of Bengal, and Darjeeling—so the Hillmen assured me—is the “summer capital.” Dacca, again, is the “second capital” of the Province, and I have listened with some interest to find out whether any claim to be considered in some way a capital of Bengal would be advanced by the city fathers of Barisal. No such claim has been put forward and I am, therefore, encouraged to believe that I have found a town at last which makes no claim to paramountcy, past or present, but is content to be what in England we should call a decent country town. Of Barisal I feel on safe ground in saying what I have not dared to say anywhere else, that it is the first “mufussil” town that I have visited in Bengal. And though you are no capital city, I can assure you that I have come here with an interest by no means less lively in all that you may have to tell or to show me, an interest which has been enhanced by the trip through your waterways—to me a novel experience—and the glimpse that trip has given me of the conditions of the life prevailing in south-eastern Bengal. I have also listened with interest to the addresses which have been read this morning, and I must at once gratefully acknowledge the sentiments of loyalty to the Throne and Person of His Majesty the King-Emperor to which you have given expression.

The Municipal Commissioners have referred to the very natural interest which they take in the forthcoming discussions on the Bengal Municipal Bill. The Commissioners, through members who think with them, will have every opportunity of amending the measure—which,

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Barisal, 30th July, 1932.

I am glad to see, already has their general approval—so as to secure the elimination of features which may seem to them objectionable. But if these are, as I understand, the provisions which seek to reserve to the Ministry certain powers of direction and control, I would only say that there would seem to be nothing very undemocratic in giving such powers to a popularly elected Minister acting under the control of a Legislature to be constituted on the most democratic lines. As for its being “inconsistent with the idea of expansion of Local Self-Government” to reserve such powers to the Ministry, I can only say that surprise has been expressed by competent and unbiased authorities at the freedom from control by the Provincial Governments which local bodies already enjoy in India, as compared with local authorities in other countries such as Great Britain, France and Germany. One such authority has, indeed, remarked: “To those accustomed to the very real influence exercised over local bodies in England..... this mistaken idea of freedom from provincial control appears to have had the most unfortunate results in India.” Frankly, I see little cause for complaint in the existence of provisions enabling the Local Government to exert, through the Ministers and his Department, some of those powers of help, guidance and co-ordination which local bodies are entitled to expect from Government.

I THANK you for the cordial welcome that you have¹ accorded me. I can assure you that it is always a pleasure to me to meet gentlemen who, like yourselves, are

¹ Speech at the opening of the Union Board Conference, Dacca, 13th July, 1933.



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playing an active part in the local Government of the Province. Your office and duties bring you into the closest possible touch with the realities of local administration and the Hon'ble Minister and I feel that we have everything to gain from attending your conferences and hearing your views and experience at first hand.

Your Conference has been held rather earlier than usual this year, and complete figures for the past year are not yet available to me. From the figures quoted, and from others that I have seen, it is clear that the Union Boards of this district have surmounted with credit the difficulties of another year of economic stringency. I am glad to see that figures of collection for Union Board rates have maintained the upward tendency of recent years, while figures of expenditure on works of village improvement are likely, when fully compiled, to show a marked recovery. I welcome also the statement that political agitation is no longer seriously hampering the administration of the Boards, and that some who in the past have carried on a vendetta against the Boards have recently come forward to participate in their activities. It is, if I may say so, the more disappointing to learn that with the virtual disappearance of political opposition, the progress of the Boards has been brought to a standstill in some quarters by party faction and personal squabbles. India, I am afraid, is not the only country where local administration sometimes suffers from the obtrusion of personal jealousies, but I agree with your Chairman that we must do all that we can to avoid such a paralyzing blight. It would be a tragedy if, where obstruction for political ends has failed, petty jealousy should undo the work of years. I am particularly perturbed to hear of the effect that this manifestation of personal feelings has had on the progress of



Union Courts and Benches. To my mind one of the most valuable features of the Village Self-Government Act is the provision for Union Courts and Benches for the local settlement of petty disputes. But the usefulness of these courts depends almost entirely on the confidence which they inspire in their own localities, and confidence is a delicate plant. Where even the suspicion of personal bias enters, the usefulness of the institution is destroyed, and in the administration of justice confidence once shaken is not easily restored. The remedy, I think, clearly lies in a return to the ideal of public service for its own sake. Let those stand aside who aspire to personal gain or position. Let them leave the work of the Boards to others—the great majority, I am sure—who are willing to labour for the benefit only of their locality and of the people who have trusted them. 3

With regard to his reference to the desirability of relieving local bodies of charges in respect of civil veterinary work and placing the expense on Provincial revenues, I am afraid that I cannot go all the way with our Chairman. Indeed, I think such a policy might in many quarters be considered retrograde, for the Royal Commission on Agriculture themselves definitely recommended devolution of this responsibility to local bodies so far as their funds permit. The position in Bengal is that while local bodies are expected to bear two-thirds of the pay and allowances of the Veterinary Surgeons employed under them, Government bear the entire cost of the Staff of the Veterinary Department employed for purposes of control and supervision, and are also responsible for the cost of veterinary education in the Province. Government further bear a large proportion of the cost incurred in the control of epidemics, by supplying free of charge to local bodies the sera and vaccines 4 5

necessary for this purpose up to a value of Rs. 70,000 annually. Nor can it in fairness be said that Government are not alive to the importance of propaganda : we have, as a matter of fact, a special Propaganda Inspector whose duty it is to educate public opinion and to stimulate local interest in veterinary matters.

There is only one other topic that I wish to touch on before leaving you to your deliberations. It does not arise out of anything in the Report we have heard read, nor out of any matters noted for discussion in your agenda. It arises rather out of the circumstances in which you live your lives from day to day. I refer to the very serious increase in the figures for what I may call "ordinary crime," especially crimes of violence, which has marred the record of the Province during the past three years. Not that Bengal has had any monopoly of this wave of crime : it is widespread over India and has manifested itself in other countries during the troubled and anxious times through which the whole world has been passing; but my purpose this morning is to refer to it only in so far as it affects yourselves—the people of this Province. We all have, I imagine, a pretty clear idea of the causes to which this wave of crime is due. In part it is undoubtedly due to the economic depression through which we are passing,—with its concomitant evils of unemployment and of scarcity of fluid cash resources. Partly also—and in great part, I am afraid—it is due to the spirit of lawlessness engendered—indeed deliberately fostered—by those whose aim has been the coercion of Government by the weapon of civil disobedience. Nothing is more remarkable about the figures for "ordinary crime" than the fact that, while dacoities had more than trebled, comparing 1931 with 1920, and robberies had more than doubled comparing the same years,



the more furtive crimes of dishonesty, like burglary and theft generally committed by a single individual, have dropped to the neighbourhood of half the figure at which they stood in 1919 and 1920. This indicates that now when, according to the teaching of some individuals, it is not shameful or criminal, but even laudable to break the law, those with propensities that way have been banding themselves together to achieve by force of numbers and open violence, or the threat of it, what in the past was attempted singly and in secret. After all, one cannot, day in and day out, preach wholesale disobedience of the law and contempt of all constituted authority to the illiterate masses, or to immature young men forced to abandon their studies prematurely, and expect them to differentiate between the laws they will violate and those they will obey. If you sow the wind of disobedience, you must expect a whirlwind of crime. Pre-occupied as many of their best men have perforce been in upholding the very bases of society in the struggle with subversive political movements, deprived in some areas of any semblance of co-operation from the people, the Police have had to fight what must at times have seemed a losing battle, and they have seen dissipated in as many months the fruits of years of labour spent in controlling crime. //

There are, however, definite indications, that at last the corner has been turned. Though in 1932 there were as many as 51 political dacoities as against 30 in the previous year, the year concluded has shown a marked *decrease* in the total number of both dacoities and robberies, and a marked *increase* in the number of convictions under both heads. The figures for 1933, though serious enough, indicate that the improvement is being maintained and enhanced. If offences due to political agitation have diminished to a comparatively insignificant figure,—



and I hope the tide of depression is turning,—is not this the time to strike a united blow against the robber, the dacoit, the thief and the receiver? In the nature of things it will take the Police years to re-establish their old ascendancy over the criminal. Without your help—without the help of the public at large—that consummation may be indefinitely postponed. You know the likely criminals of your own localities and the methods by which serious outbreaks of crime can be controlled. This may be done by intensive patrolling, the vigilance of *chaukidars* and village defence parties, timely warning to the local Police, co-operation at the time of investigation, and assistance in the preparation and conduct of legal proceedings. You are in a sense the keepers of the public conscience in this matter. The Police have received directions to seek your co-operation, and from some quarters good results have already been reported. Security of life and property cannot be a matter of indifference to you. Let us unite to strike a blow that shall be decisive at this turning point of the struggle.

I AM glad to welcome you here at this the first conference of Chairmen of District Boards in Bengal at which I have been able to attend since I assumed office as Governor of this Presidency.

It is perhaps not too late to wish you all a very happy New Year. We all hope that 1936 will see the clouds of depression still further lifted, and knowing as I do how much the welfare of your district Funds is bound up with the revival and healthy interaction of agriculture

¹ Speech at the opening of the Conference of Chairmen of District Boards, Calcutta, 6th Jan., 1936.



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and commerce, I trust that our hopes of improvement will not be falsified.

Let us face the fact that the year will not be without its difficulties. I do not want to exaggerate them—still less do I want you to overstate them. I regard myself on this occasion as speaking not in public, nor even to a representative gathering of men in public life in the province. I am addressing you privately as executive heads of the District Boards, and on that understanding I feel that I can take you into my confidence.

Those of you who come from the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions are faced with anxieties on account of the failure of crops over large areas. The coming months are going to make heavy calls on your powers of organizing useful work to relieve the situation. I would like to assure you that Government are fully alive to the necessities of the case, and have already taken steps to ensure that the efforts which must be put forth are co-ordinated and adequately supported. At the same time I trust the Chairmen concerned and their colleagues, will do their utmost to resist clamour and to discourage anything like panic. In times of scarcity there is always the impression that those who make the most clamour can get the greatest benefit. If that idea gains prevalence, the result is that those who are in the sorest straits may in some cases be left to suffer in silence. Speaking to you privately, I can say quite frankly that Government in some districts will have to come to your assistance, or to put it in another way, will have to ask your co-operation in devising and carrying out schemes of relief that will require help from provincial funds. It would however be most unfortunate if the impression got about that because Government is preparing to help, local resources can either be stinted or be expended with greater laxity

4 or extravagance than would normally be the case. The situation is one that calls for foresight and careful preparation, so that when action is necessary for the organisation of relief works, it shall not only be rapid but well planned and deliberate. We, on our part, shall do our best to see that our preparation is adequate. I hope you, on your part, will get in the closest personal touch with the Collectors of your Districts, size up your requirements and lay your plans quietly. Above all, discourage exaggeration and panic that only lead to waste and inefficiency. Government and its local officers look for your help at times of scarcity to carry out relief measures of prime importance, and to assist in every way in the collection of information, the devising of schemes and the controlled expenditure of public money to the greatest benefit of the people. We rely upon your loyal co-operation and public spirit, your organizing ability and initiative, and on your cool-headedness and powers of leadership, to help us in dealing successfully with the difficulties ahead of us in the drought affected districts.

5 To those of you who are concerned with jute, I would like to say something about the restriction of the crop. It is difficult to get people to entertain this idea about something upon which they rely to bring in money, and the course of its prices in the past year will not make it any easier. As a result of the restriction that was accomplished, prices throughout the season ruled higher than they did in the corresponding months of the previous year. After a temporary fall they recovered again—perhaps after a considerable portion of the crop had already passed out of the hands of the cultivators. This recent rise in prices, which has been substantially maintained till the present time, may make it all the harder to persuade the cultivator to restrict his sowings.



But I ought to tell you that the situation as regards its manufacturing side is by no means free from anxiety. Whatever may be the outcome of these difficulties that are at present threatening it, I am convinced that effective restriction of the crop is absolutely essential in the interests of the cultivators themselves, and in the narrower interest of your own revenues, which are bound up with their prosperity, I would ask you to exercise the whole weight of your influence towards assisting the local officers of Government in this task.

Another matter to which I wish to refer is the Government of India grant for rural uplift, and in particular that portion of the grant that has been allotted for the improvement of water supply and the establishment of Union Board dispensaries. As has been explained to you in the official correspondence that has been issued, the grant for these two objects, for the province exclusive of Darjeeling and Chittagong Hill Tracts, is Rs. 3,69,800. The intention is, so far as is possible, that half of this amount should be spent on dispensaries, the other half, together with any amount that cannot advisedly be spent on dispensaries, being spent on rural water supply in the districts to which it has been allotted. I realize that in some of the smaller districts the actual allotment does not look very big. But taken as a whole, the amount definitely earmarked for water supply represents more than one-third of what the District Boards themselves spent in the last financial year upon water supply projects both for capital and recurring charges. When it is remembered that this special grant is to be spent on capital projects only, you may agree that it is a very definite addition to the resources of District Boards. I would also remind you that if local contributions, whether in money or in labour, are forthcoming, the value of this allotment

will be proportionately enhanced. As regards the grant for rural dispensaries, I may observe that the amount allotted is very considerably in excess of the lakh¹ and a quarter which represented the expenditure upon dispensaries of Union Boards in the year 1932-33, which is the latest period for which returns are available.

I have mentioned these matters which are outside the scope of your agenda, because they are questions of pressing importance which are closely connected with your task of local self-government. I have no intention of distracting you from the problems before you—less still of entering into questions of politics. Local self-government is not politics, and the less it has to do with politics the better for it. It is an art which even in the most advanced countries in the world is still regarded by its most enthusiastic students as in its infancy, and it is one upon which depend, to a large extent, the health, happiness and convenience of the bulk of the population.

If local problems are primarily the responsibility of local authorities to solve—and in principle I think they are—it is no less the responsibility of Government to provide that co-ordination of effort, that technical advice, those legal powers and administrative conditions under which a solution can be facilitated. In connection with the problems at present before you, you will be asked, bearing in mind the limitations, especially those of finance, under which Government itself labours, to give us the benefit of your experience and your local knowledge and to pool your ideas with a view to discovering what can be done within the limits that are placed upon us.

I now come to two questions on your agenda, namely the general question of improving rural water supply and

¹ One-tenth of a million.



the development of anti-malarial schemes. I do not wish to anticipate—less still to prejudice—your discussions; but there are certain considerations in the light of which these problems might be viewed.

Government have had ample evidence of the strong feeling that exists that the improvement of the water supply in rural areas should be effectively speeded up. Although it might be said that this is primarily a problem for local authorities to solve, Government have long recognized that with the inelastic resources at their disposal, local authorities by themselves are not able to finance from their current revenue large measures of expansion and improvement. In fact, a glance at the figures will show that the grants by Government to District Boards for various purposes amounted, in 1932-33, to well over half as much as their income from cess collections. You, on your side, will recognize the difficulties either of allotting to District Boards more expansible sources of revenue or of increasing the grants from provincial resources. On the revenue side, the Village Self-Government Act has placed in the hands of the rural people the power of taxing themselves for their own benefit, and the latest published figures at present available show that the Union Boards on their own account raised some ten lakhs a year for purposes other than rural police. They received from District Boards a further four and three quarter lakhs of which nearly two lakhs was for the specific purpose of works delegated to them. From Government they received less than a lakh and a quarter, and they raised contributions of their own exceeding a lakh and a half. Out of these resources they spent among other things roughly a lakh and a quarter on dispensaries, over three lakhs and forty thousand on schools, and six lakhs on roads. On water supply they spent five and a half



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lakhs—an amount almost equivalent to what was spent by the District Boards in that year. I have quoted these figures—which I trust are correct—to show that increased powers of taxation under the Village Self-Government Act can produce real results, but your experience and your local knowledge will tell you whether the taxable capacity of rural areas will permit of the pace being increased on these lines.

So far as District Boards are concerned, Government makes a special annual grant for water supply, which used to be two and a half and now for some years has been two lakhs and has offered special facilities by which loans may be raised at a low rate of interest for capital projects. For some reason or other, it has been found that District Boards, except I think in three districts, have failed to avail themselves of these loan facilities. We realize that it is a serious matter for a Board to mortgage its future, especially at a time when recurring expenses have proved hard to meet. But we feel that the time has come when your experience of these problems should be pooled in order to make clear both the difficulties that have been encountered and the best way of overcoming them. It is not the policy of Government to force District Boards to take loans, but they do want to know why advantage has not been taken of this scheme and what practical modifications or alternatives can be suggested.

A further item on your agenda deals with the question of anti-malarial schemes. I shall content myself with pointing out the strong feeling that has been evinced in the legislature that more ought to be done, and asking you to consider the problem in the light of your own special conditions and try to arrive at some conclusion as to what practical measures can be put forward in your districts to deal with the malaria problem.



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I do not want you to think that in these matters Government is merely passing its responsibility on to you. We recognize our obligation to assist not only by technical advice but by legislation, administrative action and when necessary and possible, by financial aid. We do, however, wish it to be felt that these institutions are more than mere agents for the execution of provincial projects, and that we can look to them for constructive study of problems which are primarily theirs. While I am on this subject, may I say I would like to feel that the District Boards were taking up the same attitude to the Union Boards within their areas. I have already referred to the substantial contribution that the Union Boards can make to local revenues, and I feel that with guidance and encouragement their contributions in other respects can be enhanced in value.

They require your help and you in turn are entitled to receive from them initiative. In particular they can create that local effort in the form of voluntary contributions or labour which may form a very substantial addition to your revenues. I shall not trench on the question of Local Boards. I would, however, ask you to consider how best the contact between District and Union Boards can be made a live and personal one in co-operation with the officers of Government, so as to enhance their practical value as a means of developing the latent resources of the countryside.

MEETING you, as I do to-day, for the last time in a¹ conference of this nature, I have been deeply touched by

¹ Speech at the Conference of Union Boards of the Dacca District, 15th July, 1937.

the generous references you have made to me personally. Five years—it is more than five years now—is no negligible period in an individual career. But it is a short time in which to grapple with problems so grave and complicated as those that have confronted the Province of Bengal. If I have been able to make any contribution towards bringing some of them into a clearer light and finding some approach towards their solution, I count myself doubly fortunate both in the support I have received, and in the generous appreciation that has been vouchsafed to me.

Yet I would be the last to claim that the major problems of rural Bengal have been brought to solution. Our feet are set on the way but a long journey lies before us. It will be for others to survey the country that lies ahead—to map out the path for the future and to guide and inspire your progress. In the nature of things it is to Ministers responsible to the Legislature that you will look to initiate the policies of the future and put them into operation. Yet, as I conceive it, the Governor will have his part to play. Relieved though he is of this task, it will still be his duty and his privilege to lend the full weight of his support to his advisers' measures for the social and economic welfare of the King-Emperor's subjects. The discharge of that duty will continue to call for a full understanding on his part of the issues that confront the Ministers, and for such knowledge as the Governor can himself acquire of the lives, the needs and the progress of all classes of people in the Province. Personally I shall carry away the happiest memories of these all too brief periods, that I have been able to spend away from the routine of official business, and among the people of rural Bengal.

Your Chairman has given us a glimpse of his own



experiences on tour in remote places. I have no doubt that the contacts thus established and the knowledge thus gained are of the greatest value to the fruitful expansion of village self-government and the full exploitation of its possibilities.

Dacca is pre-eminently one of those districts in which the awakened consciousness of the rural classes has found vent in constructive works carried out by local effort and by labour gladly given and wisely applied. I will not repeat what I have said on previous occasions regarding the value of such service, both to those who give it and to those who receive. I am confident that the experience once gained will not be lost. Let me say, however, that in the scheme of things in Bengal the importance of Union Boards is not to be measured by their size. Small they may be—negligible they are not. Their close contact with the people, the opportunities they offer for public service, and the record of accomplishment and initiative that you yourselves have shown, establish them as one of the most potent agencies for the regeneration of the villages of Bengal.

You have been good enough to refer with appreciation to the help and guidance you have received from the officers of Government. I would like to take this opportunity of associating myself with that expression. Apart from the leadership and sympathy of the higher officers of Government in the mufussil, I am well aware of the great volume of useful and devoted work done by members of the Provincial services in subdivisions and rural circles—work which is essential and of the greatest value, however inconspicuous it may be and however infrequently it may meet with formal and public recognition on an occasion of this kind. The contribution of officers of Government to rural development has lost



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none of its value under the new constitutional scheme. The Governments now established in India need, and are entitled to service from their responsible public officers. The initiation and control of policy has now passed to Ministers. Advice on technical and administrative matters, the loyal and imaginative execution of policy, the co-ordination of activities between officers of the various departments for the smoothing out of local difficulties, and the inspiration of local effort are matters in which the unflagging labour of the public services will ever remain an asset of the greatest value to Governments and people alike. For my part, as the constitutional head of the Crown services in this Province, I shall not fail to encourage, by precept and example, the wholehearted efforts of my officers in carrying out such measures for the benefit of the rural areas as my advisers, in the discharge of their duties, may undertake.

It is nearly five years ago to a day that I first came up¹ the *Buriganga* to visit your ancient city set in a land of broad rivers and beautified by the gardens of *Ramna*² beyond. I might describe my first visit as a voyage of discovery, as indeed have been so many of my journeys in the five years that have followed. On that occasion you laid before me an account of the needs and problems of your city and district as they presented themselves to you—problems every one of which involved personal study, and consultation with my then colleagues, to seek

¹ Reply to the Farewell Addresses presented at Dacca, 20th July, 1937.

² The portion of Dacca town where Government House and the Dacca University are located.

for a solution. To-day it is no longer my responsibility as the Governor of this Province to decide those matters of administrative or legislative policy with which, as local self-governing bodies or as representatives of the rural population, you are most closely concerned. That knowing this you should have come to pay me so generous a tribute of farewell is to me a source of sincere gratification.

Yet, though a Governor may no longer be accountable for the solution of your problems, let me assure you that he is no less concerned than before to appreciate and study them. If I may so put it without appearing to be flippant, the principles of democracy do not demand that the Sovereign or his representative should be singled out among the community as the only person in the State who is not entitled to have an opinion of his own. On the contrary, it seems to me that for the Governor to cease to be interested, merely because he is no longer primarily responsible would be rendering poor recognition to his constitutional advisers and meagre service to the people of his Province. How far his opinions may be of value if they are wanted, must depend very largely on the material upon which they are based, and upon the opportunities that he himself may obtain to study and attempt to understand the problems with which his advisers are faced and which they are responsible for solving. How far his opinions may count must depend in the long run on the extent to which they are wanted, and also what they are worth when forthcoming. How far they may be expressed save in the intimacy of the Council Chamber or with the authority of his advisers is another matter still. But this I would ask you in all sincerity to believe, that whenever and wherever they are expressed, they will have but one object in view—to

further the cause of ordered and constitutional progress in this Province.

Bearing this in mind, you will not expect from me a statement of policy regarding the subject of detenus upon which, though not municipal in nature, you have been moved to express the depth of your feeling. You have already expressed your feeling on this question to Ministers and have received from the Chief Minister, as their spokesman, an indication of the manner in which my Government is approaching this problem and the general line of policy which they propose to adopt. I do not propose to amplify or interpret what my Ministers have said. And in fact, with the session of the legislature so near at hand, it may be doubly inappropriate for me to make any detailed statement of the kind which would be eminently fitting for the Ministers to make. I may, however, dispose here and now of the suggestion that the apparent delay on the part of Ministers in making definite and final pronouncements in this matter has been due to some disagreement between myself and my Ministers. I can say categorically that there has been no such disagreement, and I cherish the hope and belief that it will, in fact, never arise. Ministers have their duty and I mine, but our responsibilities in this matter are co-extensive. Moreover, we have to decide upon exactly the same material, and we share the natural desire that the enforcement of emergency measures, involving preventive detention without normal legal process and various other abnormal restrictions upon personal liberty, should be brought to an end as soon as due consideration for the public safety will allow. I would, however, ask you to bear in mind the responsibility with which Ministers are charged in this matter—a responsibility which is in no



way ousted or undermined by the existence of a special obligation on the part of the Governor, Ministers are required to make a thorough and conscientious examination of the whole matter in order to justify their position. I would, therefore, ask you in all fairness to await its results.

May I say one thing more on a note which I should hesitate to strike if this were not a very personal occasion. I am drawing near the end of my term as Governor of Bengal—a term which I know was heralded by copious references in the Press to my experiences or supposed experiences in Ireland. I recognize with gratitude that since I came here the vast majority of people have been content to judge me by my work in Bengal and that no doubt is as it should be. But I am aware that even now hints are dropped here and there that a liberal view could never be expected from anyone who had served the Crown in Ireland during what were called the “troubles.” I have never talked about my work in Ireland. What I did or refrained from doing is a matter in which I was answerable not to public opinion but to the British Cabinet, and I would not say what I am about to say even now were it not that by so doing I may remove misapprehensions and thereby serve a public interest. With this in mind, I think, there is one disclosure which after a lapse of sixteen years may be made without impropriety. When in 1921¹, in pursuance of a

¹ In December 1921, a delegation led by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins came to London and negotiated a treaty with Mr. Lloyd George. Ireland, with the exception of the North-Eastern Countries, was to become a Free State, with the status of a Dominion within the British Empire; she was to have her own Parliament and there was to be no compulsory connection with England except that her ministers were to take an oath to the King and accept the King's nominee as Governor-General; and that £5 million per annum were to be paid by way of annuities for land hitherto held by Englishmen in Ireland.



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treaty, the British Government were about to transfer to Irish Ministers responsibility for what is now the Irish Free State, there were many Irish prisoners still in gaol as a result of the preceding conflict. As the principal permanent adviser of Cabinet Ministers in such matters, I had to consider the situation. With full knowledge of all the circumstances and after weighing up possible consequences and reactions with the greatest care, I recommended the release of those prisoners. That course as a matter of fact was followed. Whether it was right or not is not now in question, and I must ask you not to draw any analogy as regards the present situation from this personal reminiscence. The facts and circumstances were so different from those of Bengal that no practical inference can be drawn for us—except this one which you may perhaps be good enough to draw, that I do not approach and never have approached such questions with any bias in favour of keeping people in custody merely for the sake of doing so.

In the matter of which I have spoken I have a contingent responsibility—however remote that contingency may be. In the other matters to which you have referred I fear that it would be beyond the scope of my authority to give you a reply. Cheap light and plentiful water are among the foremost amenities that a city of this importance may strive to obtain, and I shall not fail to transmit to the respective departments of my Government the representations that you have made on the subject. I shall await with interest and sympathy the advice that may be tendered to me on both of these matters, and I have no doubt that such advice will be based on a full study of these problems by Ministers anxious to discharge their responsibilities with competence and imagination; but when such advice has been constitutionally



tendered I shall, as in duty bound, be guided by it.

You have been good enough to recall certain of the legislative and administrative measures with which I have been associated and which bear more directly upon the lives of the rural people. A few days ago I had the opportunity of observing how keenly alive to possibilities of progress are the rural inhabitants of this district. If it has been vouchsafed to me to make any contribution towards rekindling the flame of vitality and hope among the villages of Bengal, I am grateful for the opportunity, and grateful also to those who have bestirred themselves among the people to direct their energies into constructive channels.

The task of dealing with the burden of rural indebtedness has passed the stage of legislation, but is still in the early stages of practical administration. I can however say, with the full authority of my Ministers, that Government are firmly resolved to see this task through.

In this and in many other matters affecting local self-government, it is a matter of the sincerest gratification to me that projects conceived under the previous regime have been found worthy of acceptance and development among the many preoccupations of an enlarged and responsible cabinet coming to their task with fresh minds and augmented resources. The seal of that approval, no less than the generous words you have used to-day, is a tribute that I shall always value. It gives me reason to hope that however transitory the work of an individual may be, some of my labours may not have been in vain.

I could have wished that in the course of these five years the preoccupations of office and the pressure of Government business had allowed me to spend longer



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periods in this Eastern capital and in the byways of rural Bengal. At any rate, I feel sure that the warmth of your welcome and the charms of your city and countryside will render my visits to you happy memories that I shall now carry away.



CSL

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I

CENTRAL RESPONSIBILITY¹

It is perhaps not unnatural on your part to dwell almost entirely upon the subject of the forthcoming constitutional reforms. The issues involved are momentous, and the interests of your community are great. In dealing with a matter of this kind, which is under the active consideration of the Government of India and of the Secretary of State, the Governor of a province must of necessity observe restraint. I think, however, that I may permit myself some observations even on this delicate topic.

Let me first take up the question of the franchise. You are not, I think, alone in doubting the practicability of the large extension of the franchise contemplated by the Committee over which Lord Lothian presided last year. It is safe to prophesy that the matter is one in which Parliament will take a keen interest. While we are told that the general sense of the Round Table Conference definitely favoured acceptance of the Committee's proposals, the last word has not yet been said on the subject. The task of providing for the polling of an electorate of seven and a half millions in Bengal would be a stupendous one even if it were not complicated by the necessity of providing for communal or special interests. If,

¹ European Association Dinner Speech, Calcutta, 3rd Feb., 1933.

however, it has to be undertaken, it will be undertaken, though it can only be, I fear, at the expense of a great strain on the administrative machine. Whatever may be the number eventually fixed—whether seven and a half millions or some smaller figure—we shall certainly have to be prepared (and we may as well face the fact at once) for a very large extension of the present electorate.

2 Turning to the subject of Central responsibility, there are, broadly speaking, three schools of thought. There are those who regard nothing as worthwhile unless there is responsibility at the Centre. Again, there are those who set great store by provincial autonomy, but are more or less indifferent to the form of Government at the Centre. Finally, there are those who would definitely urge postponement of any transfer of power at the Centre and some of whom also entertain misgivings as to the consequences of provincial autonomy. Your Chairman has left us in no doubt as to the category to which the European Association belongs.

3 Now, as you are aware, the Secretary of State has recently made clear the policy of His Majesty's Government in this matter. It is to go right ahead without interposing any delay beyond that which the conditions of the problem themselves impose. To complete the structure must, of course, take some little time. I do not doubt that one outcome of the proceedings of the last Round Table Conference¹, when practical details came under closer scrutiny than was the case before, has been to make clear to all who took part the immensity of the task ahead. But this much is certain from Sir Samuel Hoare's² statement, reaffirmed by the Viceroy in the

¹ Third Round Table Conference, 1932.

² Now Home Secretary, London.



Assembly—that there is to be no question of introducing provincial autonomy in any form and leaving Central responsibility to follow as a mere contingency of the future.

It may, therefore, be not altogether out of place if I offer certain reflections of my own upon the bearing of the problem of Central responsibility on provincial administration. The general plan is at last beginning to take concrete shape, and it is clear that every effort is going to be made to render the separation of functions between the Centre and the Provinces as clean cut as possible. The field of over-lapping powers will be reduced to a minimum. This, in my judgment, is the only statesmanlike course. Leaving aside conditions of emergency, responsible Government is not really compatible with outside control. It follows, therefore, that as regards those matters for which Provincial Ministers are to be made definitely responsible to the Provincial Legislature, the opportunities for interference by outside authority—and for this purpose the Central Government is an outside authority—must be severely restricted. The Centre will have its own functions—the administration of the railways, posts and telegraphs, customs and other central taxes, federal finance, the central judiciary, and in a special category, defence and external affairs. The Provinces, on the other hand, will have full responsibility for all those services on which the well-being of the people for the most part depends—education, agriculture, public health and sanitation, irrigation, forestry and economic development in general and, last but by no means least, what is commonly styled as law and order. The Provinces will have to administer those services and finance them, and in respect of all those things that make the difference between good government and bad

government, from the standpoint of the man in the street or the man at the plough, the people will have an Executive and legislators of their own choosing to hold to account.

As I have said, the responsibility for the due enforcement of the law and for the maintenance of good order and security for life and property will rest upon that Government and those legislators. You make no secret of the fact that you entertain misgivings. The time has not come to pronounce the final word, but I venture to say that it would certainly be a great misfortune for the Province and for all interests connected with it if, when self-government was being conferred upon the other Provinces of India, Bengal had to be singled out for special treatment. I trust that the Province may be spared that humiliation and the bitter feelings that it would inevitably arouse. I am confident that if we do work properly in the intervening period, and have the co-operation for which we may fairly look, a contingency so repellent may be left out of our calculations.

I have, however, digressed. I set out to deal with the question of Central responsibility, and so far as that question is concerned what I ask you to consider is this—what would you be likely to gain in practice, if you are to have provincial autonomy, by deferring the grant of Central responsibility? Safeguards there must be—and that not in the interests alone of any particular section—but it will not rest with the Central Government to make those safeguards effective should the occasion unhappily arise. The responsibility in that matter will be vested in the Governor-General, working no doubt with the Provincial Governors concerned. I am one of those—possibly a very small minority in this company—who think that the position of the Governor-General in such



matters will be strengthened rather than weakened by his being associated with a responsible ministry. A benevolent autocracy may be the best of all forms of government, and weak government is almost invariably bad government. But a government, autocratic in form, which stands irrevocably pledged to democratic principles can be a good and a strong one only for so long/a period as can be shown to be reasonably necessary to give effect to its pledges.

3 We have undoubtedly embarked upon a great experiment and I seek no quarrel with those who consider that it is ~~is~~fraught with grave risks. But we must all see it through. If rough weather is coming, it is often better to ride into it on an even keel than to attempt to turn back and run the /risk of being taken broadside on. I strongly deprecate the cry of "breakers ahead." All experience bears witness to the steadying effect of responsibility.

I welcome your assurance that "when the new constitution is the law, your Indian fellow-citizens will find you still ready and willing to assist in making the new Government of India Act a reality". The contribution which it is in your power to make will be invaluable. /A system of government is being established which is not indigenous to this country. You, to whom representative institutions have been familiar from your earliest days, can see the pitfalls and make others aware of them. Peoples ~~Peoples~~ 4 who have been accustomed to an autocratic government, which they regard as benign or satanic according to the ideas that others have put into their heads, will not slip very easily into the democratic tradition. It may take them some time to discover the connection between the kind of Government they get and the way they bestow their suffrages. You are a relatively small community,

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but you are to have 10 per cent of the seats in the legislature. I am glad to learn that you have been considering how you can best justify that scale of representation by finding competent people able and willing to utilize to the full, for the good of the Province, the experience which they can bring to bear upon its problems. Sectional interests and personal rivalries are bound at first to operate against the interests of efficient government. I would urge you to adopt the active policy of endeavouring to hold together the stable elements in all communities, so that the Province may have in fact, if not in form or name, a united constitutional party. It shall stand for peace, security and equality of treatment for all sections and classes, and will set before itself an ideal of purity in administration. It is this party that will have to strive honestly to achieve the solution of those pressing and difficult problems, the existence of which we are all painfully aware, and whose importance transcends all considerations of party, race or sect.



CSL

II

NEW ORDER¹

ABOUT your loyalty to co-operate in working the new constitution, there may be some issues in which you do not agree with the Joint Committee, but you evidently have no doubt about the scheme being workable, and for my part I unhesitatingly share your opinion. That many aspects of the scheme should have attracted criticism, and indeed vehement criticism, was inevitable, having regard not only to the political history of the question but also to the unparalleled complexity of the issues involved and to the diversity of interests affected. To a substantial extent the criticisms may be said to cancel each other out. While it would be both foolish and unfair to belittle the sincerity of conviction underlying certain criticisms, there can, on the other hand, be no doubt whatever that in many cases these are based upon a misconception of the working of constitutional democracy. Though this is not an appropriate occasion to go into these matters fully, I should like to instance one such case. It is provided in the Joint Select Committee's Report that Ministers shall be dismissible at the pleasure of the Governor, and I have found that this proposal is being criticized (and in this province) on the ground that it makes the Governor master of the

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Murshidabad, 16th Jan., 1935.



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situation for all purposes. Now that is a complete/misconception. There are two powers entrusted to the Governor which are correlative and which he must possess if the principle of ministerial responsibility is to be made effective. One is the power to dismiss Ministers and the/other is the power to dissolve the Legislature. These powers are inseparable. It must happen from time to time that Ministers cease to have the confidence of the Legislative Assembly. When that happens one or other must/go, and someone must have the responsibility of deciding which it is to be. In that contingency the Governor has to make up his mind, on the best advice available to him, which of the two parties/in dispute, Ministers or the Legislature, really commands the confidence of the electorate, and he must choose accordingly. A great authority on constitutional law has said of the British constitution that "the prerogatives of the Crown have/become the privileges of the people,"¹ and the instance I have given aptly illustrates the truth of that dictum. I have thought it worth while to go into this matter because it helps to bring out the complexities of the whole problem and the dangers that beset those who would commit themselves to a too hasty judgment.

[IN trying to make a contribution to your discussions² I find myself in a double difficulty. First, I have had no time to prepare an elaborate thesis, and secondly, the scope of the matters about which I/can talk in my

¹ *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* by Prof. A. V. Dicey.

² Speech at the Rotary Club Luncheon, Calcutta, 10th Aug., 1937.



present position of constitutional Governor is extremely limited. The Rotarian motto "Service before Self" has given me an idea. That motto, if it had not already been appropriated would, I think, be an excellent one for the public service to take to itself. I do not mean that members of that service should be expected to render service without pay, or service on such conditions of pay as would deny them the ordinary amenities for themselves and their families that men of equal ability could get in a commercial or professional career.

What the principle of service before self implies in the case of a public service is all the self-imposed discipline and the restrictions that are demanded of men in that position. In that connection I would like to say something from my experience about the position of the Civil Service in relation to Ministers. I shall not be speaking primarily with reference to Indian conditions, but with reference to the traditions established in the Civil Service in Great Britain over a long period of years.

I am not suggesting for a moment that the traditions of the Indian Services are in any way intrinsically inferior to those of their counterpart at Home, but they have grown up under, and have had to be adapted to conditions now profoundly modified by the advent of responsible Government. The British Civil Service has worked under conditions of responsible Government for several generations. It has developed traditions which have been held up to admiration all the world over. There must be many who hope to see the traditions of the Public Services in India develop upon similar lines under the new conditions of responsible Government to which they now have to adapt themselves. I thought, therefore, that it might be of interest if I were to say

something about the relations of Civil Servants to Ministers in the service which I know best.

The first thing is that the Civil Servant has nothing to do with politics. He must have no obvious political affiliations. He is entitled, as an individual, to his own political views. He has a vote and can use it as he likes. But he is not entitled to make a parade of any particular political faith. Here I must digress: I must try to make clear what I conceive to be the difference between policy and politics. To do that I must be forgiven if I make some reference to the functions of Ministers. Now, Ministers have two capacities. In the first place, they are servants of the State, charged with a duty not to one party but to all parties and entitled, in carrying out that duty constitutionally, to the full resources, moral and material, that the State can provide. In that capacity they are paid salaries, and in that capacity they have to formulate and put into execution administrative policies for which they take responsibility to the Legislature. Now, once they have taken responsibility to the Legislature and are carrying out the administrative policy, they are not politicians but Ministers of the Crown. On the other side of the picture, they have another capacity. They come into office as the leaders of political parties. To get themselves into office and to keep themselves there they need all the machinery of party propaganda and party organisation, and that implies party connections, party emblems and party programmes. That is politics.

With that side of the picture the Civil Servant has nothing whatsoever to do, but with the other side of the picture, with Ministers in their capacity as servants of the State, putting into force an administrative policy for which they are responsible, the Civil Servant has everything to do. That then is what I mean when I say that a Civil



Servant can make no parade of his political faith. Most Civil Servants at Home avoid political meetings altogether, and for a Civil Servant to go no further even than to occupy a seat on a party platform would certainly be regarded as of very doubtful propriety. It is only by rigid avoidance of party connections that a Civil Servant can give that unquestioning and unquestionable loyalty which every lawful Government is entitled to expect from him in the formulation and carrying out of its administrative policy. On the other hand it is sometimes said that the Civil Servant has nothing to do with policy. That is not true ; but before we go any further we must stop for a moment to see the source from which servants of the Crown derive their authority.]

There is quite a large class of Civil Servants who do not derive their authority by delegation from the Executive Government, for instance an officer exercising a judicial function does not derive his authority by delegation from the Law itself, and in exercising that authority he is answerable only to his own conscience and to the higher courts. Many of the functions of revenue officers and responsible police officers are not conferred upon them by the executive Government but by the Law. In such cases it will usually be found that there are provisions for control or for remedy of errors through the procedure of the courts, or by appeal to some authority of a judicial or quasi-judicial nature which is concerned, either solely or primarily, with the interpretation of the law and not with the carrying out of executive orders.

It may be that in this country, and in Great Britain, the same officer discharges some of his duties in a statutory capacity such as I have described above, and other duties in an executive capacity by virtue of powers

conferred upon him by the executive Government. In passing let me say that there is nothing repugnant to British constitutional practice in such a combination of functions in one and the same person.

But the typical case with which I really want to deal is of the officer whose responsibility has been delegated to him by superior executive authority, and who is answerable to that authority for the manner in which he discharges it. That officer is concerned with policy in this way. He must know enough about the policy of the Government he is serving for the time being to be able to judge whether anything that he proposes to do is likely to be a source of embarrassment to his Government. If it is likely to become a source of embarrassment it is his duty, in that case, to refer for instructions before taking action, unless circumstances of special urgency render that impossible. Let me make it clear, however, that when I say this I am speaking not of duties imposed upon the officers by the law, to be discharged according to law, but of duties assigned to them as the agents of Government.

Then there is the important group of Civil Servants who are concerned in secretarial departments with helping and advising Ministers in the discharge of their duties. Those Civil Servants have no responsibility for policy that may be formulated. That is the responsibility of Ministers. But if the secretarial officer is to be of any real help he must be thinking of policy all the time. He should be thoroughly familiar with the broad lines of Government policy, and the departmental sphere in which he is engaged. He should be constantly considering, in the light of his expert knowledge and experience, how a particular line of action that may be under consideration, or in course of execution, may react upon policy.



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At Home, in my experience, the relation between a Minister and his senior departmental advisers is of a very close and intimate character. The Civil Servant is the recipient of many confidences, and I have never known such trust abused. If the Minister feels he can tell his departmental adviser frankly what his own difficulties are—difficulties with his political opponents and with his party colleagues—the adviser will be in a position to apply far more intelligently and helpfully the departmental experience which it is his main function to contribute. It is upon the effectiveness of the partnership established between the Minister, irrespective of party, and his chief permanent advisers, that the practical results attained very largely depend. This applies not only in administration but also in the transaction of Parliamentary business. No head of a department can perform his duties adequately unless he is thoroughly familiar with Parliamentary forms and procedure.

That is broadly the position at Home. I feel that those conditions cannot be exactly reproduced here. A tradition has to be built up by degrees, and apart from everything else, there is an element of lack of continuity here which does not exist at Home, where every department contains senior officers of twenty to thirty years' experience of responsible work in the same department. But at this juncture when all is new, there ought to be in the minds of all concerned some conscious ideals to which to work in the relations established between Ministers and their officials.



III

AT WORK¹

I AM speaking to you at the beginning of what I trust will be a period of fruitful and continuous political development and, if I may express a personal opinion, I think the pace of that development will be determined in practice, not by the pronouncements of any formal tribunal, but by the actual course of history now in the making in India.

Addressing you as I do for the first, and in all probability the last time, I am fully conscious that some special significance may be attached to what I omit to say no less than to what I may say on this occasion. Let me then tell you at once that though circumstances might arise in which it would be appropriate—and perhaps necessary—for a Governor, in addressing the legislature, to make a declaration of the policy of the Provincial Executive—this present occasion does not in my judgment call for any such pronouncement.

A declaration of policy might be called for either upon the request of Ministers or by some necessity on the part of the Governor himself to make his own position clear in relation to a particular subject. In the matters that are likely to come before you during the present session, my Ministers will themselves present

¹ Speech at the Bengal Legislative Assembly, 29th July, 1937.

before you and justify the policy that they intend to follow—and I am happy to say that I see no reason to anticipate the operation of any contingent responsibility of mine in such a manner as to require or justify an independent statement of my own position in relation to any act or proposal of the Executive Government.

Parliamentary practice at Westminster has accustomed us to the conception of the King's speech as the vehicle for a general declaration by the Ministry of their legislative and general programme for the session. In reply to that speech a loyal Address is presented, and with that genius for illogical adaptation of historic forms to modern uses that characterizes so much of the constitution of the United Kingdom, the debate on that Address has come to be regarded as the proper occasion for the opposition to formulate their criticisms of the proposals of Government and to expound their own views.

Here in India the position is different. The Governor in addressing the legislature does so, not upon the responsibility of his Ministers, but by virtue of a statutory right vested in himself. I have no intention on this occasion of taking advantage of an address, the terms of which cannot be thrown open to general debate, to refer in a controversial spirit to matters which must of necessity be the subject of keen debate in both of your Houses—debate in which it will be for my Ministers to justify the courses which, with a full sense of their responsibilities, they intend to pursue.

You may infer from this that there is no matter of ministerial policy likely to be laid before you in which I have felt called upon in the discharge of any responsibility vested in me to be guided otherwise than by the advice of my Ministers.

There are, however, topics of constitutional interest with which I might appropriately deal. The first of these touches indirectly upon a question which has its acutely controversial aspects—the question of the Bengal detenus. I do not propose to deal with the subtleties of that question, but I feel that you are entitled to know from me not the policy that my Government intend to follow, but the manner in which I view, in general, my own special responsibilities, and the respective parts that Ministers and the Governor may be called upon to play in approaching a question of that nature.

I think I can state it very simply without sacrifice either of clarity or of precision. The Governor has a special responsibility¹ for the prevention of any grave menace to peace and tranquillity. But, as I have already said, this special responsibility in no degree ousts or undermines the primary duty that rests on Ministers. If a Ministry were to say that they recognized no obligation for preventing a grave menace to peace or tranquillity, would any electorate or legislature wish to see them remain in office? The task which devolves upon Ministers in this, like many other responsibilities which are theirs, is not specifically defined in the Act, simply because it is inherent in the very conception of that responsible Government which the Act confers.

This, then, is a case in which Ministers are called upon to discharge their responsibility to the Province. The problem is a complicated matter of long standing which they have had to examine conscientiously and minutely. It had none of the elements of grave and sudden emergency which would justify a Governor in seeking to impose a rigid time limit within which he might require the advice of Ministers. In a matter of this kind, it is

¹ Section 52, the Government of India Act, 1935.



only when their examination of the problem has been completed and they have made up their minds at least provisionally as to the advice they propose to tender—it is only then that the Governor becomes entitled to claim, as a matter of constitutional right, that his view of the precise policy to be pursued should be heard and considered before a decision is promulgated. In fact, when that stage was reached in relation to this particular question, it was clear that I should not be called upon to take a view of my responsibilities different to that which Ministers took of theirs.

But you are entitled to know what would happen in a case of this kind if a conflict, which in spite of all efforts on both sides proved irreconcilable, were unfortunately to arise. In that unhappy event, which I refuse to contemplate as within the region of probability, the Governor's view would undoubtedly prevail, subject to his ultimate obligation to Parliament. Ministers would thereupon become entitled to make a public statement of their position showing the extent of the conflict and how it had arisen. That is a state of things which, arising on an issue of such intrinsic importance, I should regard as a great public misfortune and which I would certainly strain every effort to avert. It would be a misfortune in its constitutional reactions. It would be no less a misfortune, I would venture to observe, from the standpoint of all those, of whatever political persuasion, who are anxious to see normal conditions restored as speedily as possible throughout the Province. For it is clear that a sustained and reasoned policy involving no independent action by the Governor and no divergency of opinion between Ministers themselves—a policy moreover in the pursuit of which Ministers, in the discharge of their duty to the Province, may justifiably appeal for the

co-operation of prudent men among all sections of the community—it is clear that such a policy can achieve far more, and achieve it more swiftly and successfully, without risk of adverse reactions, than would be possible if the attempt at appeasement were so far to miscarry as to be itself a cause of tension and discord. I will not elaborate further. I plead for good-will and a sympathetic understanding on the part of all who may be called upon to pronounce a responsible judgment in this grave matter.

I would only add, with all earnestness and humility, that I should be a happy and proud man if after five difficult years I could leave the shores of India with the confident belief that the time was not far distant when this Province of Bengal would no longer present any of the unenviable features which for more than a generation have distinguished it from other Provinces in India.

In this connection and at this moment, addressing you as I do for the first time, I cannot but be struck by the profound change that has come about in my own position as Governor with respect to certain matters. On previous occasions when I have addressed the Provincial Legislature I have done so as a Governor who had had to take his share of direct personal responsibility for every measure, financial or legislative, promoted by his Government in the legislature. In the field of what were known as reserved departments the Governor had an active responsibility for the decisions of the Governor in Council. In what were called the transferred departments, however much in practice he might be guided by the advice of Ministers, the decision was constitutionally his. Empowered as he was, under the Act now repealed, to overrule his Ministers at his discretion in any matter, he shared in theory and in fact the responsibility for

their decisions. Hereafter Ministers will be solely responsible to the representatives of the people for every legislative measure that may be submitted by Government for enactment in either of the Chambers assembled here to-day. That statement, which I make without qualification, I believe to be absolutely true and it is in my view an accurate index of the extent to which responsibility has been transferred from the Governor to a representative Ministry. 2

In the region of finance, always the touch-stone of popular control, responsibility under the previous constitution vested in the Governor-in-Council, whether the expenditure was to be made under the direction of a Minister or under that of an Executive Councillor. In other words, finance was a reserved subject. Under the present constitution that responsibility for finance vests in Ministers. Formerly, the Governor in the exercise of a personal responsibility gave or withheld his prior consent to every measure introduced by any member of the Legislative Council which affected the finances of the Province. In now giving or withholding that consent the Governor personally has no greater voice than he has in the initiation of the policy for which the expenditure is to be provided. 3

There are, it is true, items of expenditure charged on the revenues, for which Ministers equally with the Governor are bound to make provision. The obligation may arise either from the Constitution Act itself or from legislation that you yourselves may pass. But in respect of those matters, unless and until the contrary is stated, the Governor has no responsibility separate from that of his Ministers. 4

I may perhaps appropriately invite your attention to a change in the rules and standing orders relating to

5 financial procedure which will be of considerable interest to yourselves. The effect of that change is that there are now only two time limits to discussion of demands for grants. There is one limit of fifteen days in all set apart for the discussion of the demands for grants. The other limit is that of two days which is the maximum time that can be devoted to discussion of any one grant. The former power of the Governor to allocate a specific period, frequently brief, for each grant has disappeared, and the result is that, subject only to the limits to which I have referred, the control of the time that shall be given up to the discussion of particular demands is transferred from Government to the critics of Government. The change is intentional and the modified procedure represents a fairly close approximation to the practice of the House of Commons. It has been adopted in the hope of facilitating that responsible and discriminating criticism which in relation to the business of supply is one of the most important functions of a constitutional opposition.

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7 There is one further matter which it may be worth while to mention. It is not I think without constitutional interest and significance. Under the new Act the Governor as representative of the Sovereign becomes for the first time himself a part of the legislature. There is in fact a new legislative partnership established here, to correspond with that already existing in the United Kingdom and in every one of the great overseas Dominions¹ of the Crown, between the Sovereign and the two Chambers of the legislature. It is in this capacity, I believe, and not in his capacity as the titular head of the Executive Government that the Governor

¹ Dominions of Canada and Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

is entrusted with certain of his discretionary powers : and it is in this capacity that the Governor, when assenting to legislation, will do so in His Majesty's name. There is one departure, however, from the model of Westminster which may be noticed and which is perhaps the more significant because it is a departure also from the scheme of the previous Act. In England the Speaker¹ upon election submits himself for the approbation of the Sovereign. In India, under the Act now repealed, the selection of the President of a Provincial Legislature required the sanction of the Governor. That requirement no longer obtains. In practice it may make little or no difference, for it is difficult to conceive circumstances in which that approval would be withheld. In England during the course of several centuries there has been only one such instance². Nevertheless, I feel tempted to recall the fact that at Westminster the newly elected Speaker invariably takes occasion, after receiving the approval of his appointment, to address to the Sovereign on behalf of the Commons a plea, in words that have history behind them but

¹ The ceremony of receiving the Royal permission to elect a Speaker, and the Royal approbation of him when elected, has been constantly observed, except during the Civil War and the Commonwealth, and on three other occasions : (i) Previous to the Restoration in 1660, Sir Harbottle Grimston was called to the chair without any authority from Charles II, who had not yet been formally recognized by the Convention Parliament ; (ii) On the 22nd January 1668 when James II had fled, the Commons chose Mr. Henry Powle as Speaker, by their own authority ; (iii) When Mr. Speaker Cornwall died on the 2nd January, 1789, George III was mentally incapable of attending to any public duties ; and on the 5th, the House proceeded to the choice of another Speaker on their own authority.—May's *Parliamentary Practice*, 13th Ed.

² The only instance of the Royal approbation being refused was in the case of Sir Edward Seymour, in 1678.—May's *Parliamentary Practice*, 13th Ed. No speaker-elect, however, has been rejected since 1679, and the Royal assent has become merely a matter of form.—*English Government and Politics* by F. A. Ogg.

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retain significance in these modern days, "that the most favourable construction shall be put upon all their proceedings." This is a time-honoured formula, and I cannot help feeling a twinge of purely sentimental regret that occasion for the utterance and the acceptance of such a plea should not have been provided here. It seems to sum up the relationship of mutual respect and understanding upon which the foundations of democratic Government have been laid. But whether we utter that formula or not, surely it is not too much to hope that relations between the various organs of the State in an Indian Province, and between different communities and classes, may some day be governed in the spirit of that rule by a readiness on the part of each to place the most favourable construction upon the proceedings of the others. We are engaged in making a great experiment in democracy, an experiment in which many of us place high hopes. If the spirit to which I have referred prevails, I feel sure that sooner or later the experiment will be acknowledged to have been completely successful. I am, on the other hand, equally sure that democracy nourished on envy, hatred, malice or any other form of uncharitableness, can never thrive in any part of the world. With these words I take leave of you, praying that Divine Providence may guide and direct your deliberations.

FOR myself this occasion has a special interest in that it¹ is my last formal visit to a District under the present Constitution, and thus marks the end of a tradition.

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Bogra, 8th November, 1936.



Under the present system the Governor of Bengal shares with his colleagues in the Government a personal responsibility covering the whole field of the provincial administration. Though in fact he may, in regard to transferred subjects, be guided to the greatest possible degree by the advice of his Ministers, yet he has a definite personal responsibility for all decisions taken. To such a Governor addresses covering the whole field of Government policy and administration have hitherto been legitimately presented. It has been in keeping with his position that he should personally examine the facts as well as defend and explain the actions of Government.

Such is the present position, and such it will remain for a few more months. But from the month of April next, over the major part of the field of provincial administration, the Governor will no longer have a personal responsibility for decisions on matters of policy taken by his Government.

Were I replying a year hence to these same addresses, it is quite possible that in respect of most of the questions you have raised, I should feel constrained to content myself with the mere observation that the matter in question would be brought to the notice of the Minister concerned, or I might convey, as the constitutional Head of the administration, the views or the decisions of my Cabinet. The custom of presenting addresses, covering the whole field of administration and setting forth all the needs of local bodies and associations, is one that has become traditional, and I imagine that it may persist in spite of the constitutional changes. How far however, such a tradition will be consistent in the future with the conception of representative and responsible Government is another matter. I have no doubt

that the Governors of the future will strictly interpret the injunctions of His Majesty in Council to do all that in them lies to secure good standards of administration. How far, however, it will be appropriate for the Governor personally to expound in detail the policy or achievements of his responsible Ministers, and how far his personal intervention may in future be legitimately requested in matters upon which his Ministry will be solely responsible to the Legislature, are questions to which experience must provide the answer. I have said this much to-day because I doubt if even yet there has been a general realisation in this Province, or indeed in India, of the magnitude of the changes that are coming, and their possible effects upon the day to day activities of Government.

You will shortly proceed to take your part in the election of representatives to the new Provincial Legislature, the composition of which will eventually determine the personnel of future Ministries, their outlook on the problems of the Province in general, and their attitude departmentally to the particular requirements of local areas. It is not for me or for any officer of Government to influence you in your choice as between parties or individuals, but what I have said may bring home to you the reality and the magnitude of the responsibility that rests upon you.



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I

ARYAN CULTURE¹

I MUST thank you for the cordial welcome you have extended to me. It is over four years since a Convocation of this kind was held in Calcutta. In the meantime the Calcutta Sanskrit Association, itself the successor of the Board of Sanskrit Examinations, has become the Bengal Sanskrit Association, with a membership reduced to more manageable proportions and placed on a more democratic basis. I am glad that it has fallen to me to preside over the first Convocation held under the new scheme,—all the more, if my presence here among you serves in some degree to allay the apprehension regarding Government's sustained interest in Sanskrit studies that has apparently been entertained in some quarters.

The apprehension is quite unfounded. Indeed, if the need arose, I think I should have no difficulty in proving, even from the Budget of the current year, that such fears do less than justice to the Ministry of Education and to what Government have done and are doing for education in the old-time style and subjects. Colleges of Sanskrit were among the first educational foundations of the East Indian Company. Although, during the last half century, in response to an evergrowing demand, more

¹ Speech at the Convocation of the Bengal Sanskrit Association, Calcutta, 29th August, 1933.

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attention has been paid to education on Western lines, yet Government have continued to encourage and to subsidize with no sparing hand the lore that is taught in the indigenous institutions of the land,—the Sanskrit *tols*.¹

The President has drawn a glowing picture of education in olden days, of the fatherly devotion of the *Pandit*,² of the beneficent influence he wielded over the lives and character of his pupils, and of the passion for pure knowledge—undimmed by worldly considerations—which inspired his teaching. I agree that from some points of view it seems a pity that we had to turn from these idyllic paths. It is, however, fair to recognize that such a state of things was only possible when learning was the perquisite of the few. The position of education in Europe in the early middle ages was not altogether dissimilar,—I speak of a time when the Church and the religious orders had virtually a monopoly of learning. If nowadays our education is, for the most part, frankly utilitarian, it is surely because it is no longer the monopoly of a class—a comparatively leisured class—but is becoming part of the essential equipment of every citizen. That is the recognized position in the West. It has come to be accepted as the ideal here in Bengal,—as witness our Rural Primary Education Act. That being so, the old subjects and the old methods could not remain in sole command of the field. After all, one of the features of the system for which you stand is the length and the intensity of the courses

¹ Ancient Indian educational and cultural institutions—still thriving in India—in which *Brahmins* used to impart all kinds of learning to students, free of cost, including free board and lodging.

² A *Brahmin* scholar versed in the *Vedas* and Sanskrit philosophy, literature, history and science.



prescribed. Sanskrit, it seems, is an exacting mistress. She does not yield her secrets to any mere dabbler but demands a life-time of study. It was unavoidable, therefore, that a less exacting standard should be set up for the multitude, and though we may look back and sigh for the conditions of the Golden Age¹, we have to face the requirements of modern times.

Unquestionably, however, there is yet room for those who are able and content to pursue knowledge for its own sake. And even for those who are not, or who cannot afford to be so altruistic, there is advantage in the pursuit of branches of knowledge which of themselves are not purely utilitarian. This is a truth that is also recognized in the west. Oxford has its school of *Literae Humaniores*,—a degree in which is still regarded as providing in many ways the finest mental background for the young professional man, though its syllabus is largely confined to the study of ancient history and philosophy.

And just as there is room—indeed I would go further and say need—in any University that is to fulfil its function, for those who seek knowledge for its own sake, and for facilities to enable them to pursue their high ideal, so in the world of education generally there is both room and need for the study of the kind of subjects which are the special interest of this Association. Especially is this true of India, where in the study of Sanskrit and all that it implies in terms of knowledge, culture and philosophy, lies unquestionably India's chief and original contribution to the sum total of human wisdom and culture. There is undoubtedly a place in

¹ *Satya Yuga*—Age of Truth—first cycle of earthly existence. According to Hindu astronomy, this was a period of 1,728,000 years. From the end of the *Satya Yuga* to the present day 2,165,039 years have passed.

the India of to-day, and in the wide world beyond, for the spirit of compassion, of universal friendliness and universal forgiveness which it is the aim of the doctrines and philosophies of Sanskrit India to inculcate.

I do not underrate the importance of the personal relation in the system of education for which this Association stands. There is something exceedingly attractive in the intimate personal communion between *guru*¹ and *shishya*² which is still a characteristic feature of your tols. It is a communion of which the advantages do not, I am sure, lie all on one side. I am fully conscious of the influence which the *Pandits* wield,—an influence, I believe, entirely for good,—and I value the maintenance of the ancient bond between *Pandit* and pupil in an age not conspicuous for the discipline that it exacts from the immature, or for the respect the latter pay to their elders. A life almost monastic in its severity, and studies demanding years of unremitting toil must of necessity breed virtues of patience and fortitude. It is easy to agree that here in India, and especially at the present juncture, the *Pandits* associated with this and similar bodies provide a steadying and sobering influence in public life which may be found invaluable.

THE distinctive garb of your members is a familiar³ sight each year in the busy streets of this ancient city. In the midst of everyday affairs they come to remind

¹ A spiritual preceptor, generally a *Brahmin*.

² A disciple.

³ Speech at the Convocation of the Eastern Bengal Saraswat Samaj (an association for the cultivation of Brahminic ideals and Sanskrit learning), Dacca, 14th July, 1936.



us that scattered over the country in quiet places, men still seek to pursue untroubled, their studies in Sanskrit culture. The ancient Sanskrit civilisation has exercised a profound influence over the life not only of India but also of diverse countries in the eastern world, from the heights of the Himalayas to far off islands in tropical seas. Its study has attracted in later centuries the attention of many well-known scholars in the western world who have sought to understand and interpret a culture that has played so large a part in the spiritual development of the entire human race.

As the guardians and promoters of these studies, you are charged with a high responsibility. I have been glad to hear from your President, and from my own advisers, that you have maintained your own standards and have continued to attract a due measure of support both in this province and from distant parts of India.

While looking forward with hope and confidence to the system of Government that will soon be introduced, you have referred to a request that your *Madhya Examination*¹ as well as that of the Calcutta Sanskrit Association, should be recognized as an educational standard to qualify for franchise in the General Constituency. The question of such educational qualifications was carefully considered, having in view both the comparative standards adopted in different branches of learning and the practical difficulties of extending the franchise by such special qualifications beyond the powers of the administrative machinery to deal with it. It was decided, that for the present at any rate, it would not be possible to go below the standard of your Title Examinations. I hope, however, that large numbers of your passed students will find themselves enrolled in

¹ Equivalent to the Intermediate Examination.

virtue of other qualifications, and I believe that you will not suffer as a Samaj from the lack of that small degree of extra representation that you might otherwise have obtained in the general constituencies as a whole.

Whatever may be the controversies as regards education as a means to an end, it would be a sad day for any country when learning for its own sake ceased to be held in honour. I believe that whatever changes may take place in the future, the scholar pursuing his way in peace and quietness will ever be held in esteem by peoples and Governments in India.

We live in troubled times and the distant tumult of battle reverberates far afield to disturb the quiet contemplation of the scholar. We in this Empire have come to regard it as our privilege to pursue our ways without fear as citizens of a well guarded city. But let us not forget what we owe to those who stand on guard at the gates. Let us remember also those on whom it falls to take counsel with our neighbours in the attempt to reconstruct the shattered peace of the world. Of this at any rate I am sure, that in the effort to preserve an ordered liberty of mankind against despotism on the one hand and anarchy on the other, no force will be stronger than an abiding faith in the principles on which the British Commonwealth of Nations is endeavouring, under the inspiration of its Sovereign and his Parliaments, to preserve and develop its work for mankind.

The attainment of the age of three score years may perhaps seem of but moderate significance to the *Pandits*, whose study embraces the most ancient of philosophies and languages, and a religion that has flourished for untold centuries in these plains. The Samaj may seem to them but a thing of yesterday alongside the venerable system of learning which it seeks to promote and



maintain. The rites and ceremonies with which they have celebrated the Coronation of their present Majesties are no doubt based on forms with which countless Kings have been hallowed and sanctified to the service of their peoples in ancient and forgotten Kingdoms of this land. The structure of their educational system, on which the *Pandits* rightly pride themselves as affording a means whereby teacher and disciple may be brought most closely into contact, has the authority of many generations of experience to vouch for its value and efficacy.

Yet the system of education to which you lend your support has features which must seem peculiar to the western mind. We know of the system of medical attendance which is said to prevail in China, whereby the doctor is paid only so long as the client is well. If the client falls sick the doctor's fee ceases ; and to spur on his efforts to effect a cure he has the knowledge not only that his reputation may thereby be enhanced, but also that his pocket will once again be replenished. We have heard, too, but more from progressives than from traditionalists, of the ideal of free and universal education. But it is welcome to find a society which expects of its members that in accordance with ancient tradition it should be the teacher who will give his best efforts for the upkeep of the school, whilst the pupil need do no more than lend an attentive ear. To those of us who are parents and have had to pay school and University fees, a system of this kind would have offered many attractions.

The *Pandits* will excuse my commenting in a lighter vein on a subject which lies so near to their hearts. None realizes better than I the sacrifices which they undergo to maintain their traditional ways in these times, and to see that the culture of their fathers is not lost in

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a materialistic world. Their educational system demands a real love of knowledge in the teacher, and the belief that the instructed pupil will ultimately share his sentiment. It is this attitude of mind which in the dark ages preserved alight the lamp of learning. And when in what we are pleased to call more enlightened times the world is aglitter with knowledge, often flashy and superficial, it is by the mellow rays of this same lamp that men may still see plainly and see well.



II

ORIENTAL RESEARCH¹

I THANK the Society for the honour they have done me in asking me to be a Patron. So exalted a connection with a learned Society of the standing and repute of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, is an honour which I rate very highly. And if the exigencies of the service for which primarily I have come to India prevent my participating to the extent that I should wish, in your deliberations and activities, may I, in the words of your first Patron², whose bicentenary we have just been observing, say that "I at the same time earnestly solicit your acceptance of my services in any way in which they can be, and I hope that they may be, rendered useful to your Researches?"

This is, of course, the first formal gathering of the Society at which it has been my privilege to assist. But I have been given to understand that the Society's Annual Meeting, viewed as a social event, has been for nearly a century and a half accepted as one of the closing episodes of the busy winter season in a city which for the greater part of that period was the capital of British India, and which may still assert a claim to be regarded as the premier intellectual capital and the first centre in research.

¹ Speech at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 6th February, 1933.

² Warren Hastings.

The topics dealt with in this Annual Meeting by successive Presidents during that long period have embraced almost every department of human enquiry. Sometimes mainly utilitarian and dealing with the domestic affairs of the Society, at others theoretical and concerned with some branch of abstract science or, more frequently,—for we are practical in this Society—with Science in some of its practical applications, these Presidential Addresses seem to me to merit publication in an *ad hoc* compilation. With an adequate index it would form a work of abiding interest and even of historical value, since many of the addresses must have registered, at the time they were delivered, the high water-mark of the knowledge then available in the subject under discussion. Many of them contain speculations which in the light of subsequent investigations would be of the greatest interest to us to-day, either for their correctness or the reverse. This evening again we have listened to an exposition of juridical history and legal theory from one who has devoted his life to the subject in theory and practice, and who has given us a paper replete with the fruits of his research and experience. Surely the Society which year by year produces scholarly pronouncements of this calibre still retains the freshness and vigour of youth notwithstanding the passage of the years ?

I have been somewhat struck, if I may say so, by the arrangements for this function, and as I have no other original contribution to offer perhaps I may venture to say a few words, based upon a fairly extensive experience, on the art of arranging public meetings. The perfection of an annual meeting of a Society such as ours consists in its balanced proportion. An unbalanced and disproportionately arranged annual meeting is a weariness of



the flesh to all concerned. The annual meeting of a public institution should be an ideal blend of business reduced to essentials, of routine not unduly prolonged, of the dignity of ceremonial and of the grace of those ornamental embellishments which may, by their picturesque character, relieve whatever of dry detail must of necessity be brought forward.

Studying in the light of this ideal the reports of recent annual meetings of this ancient Society, I am glad to find evidence that a high standard of arrangement has been attained by those responsible for the planning of the programme. You begin with your elections and a résumé, commendably abbreviated, of the annual report as the first act of your piece. Then comes the *pièce de résistance*, the Presidential Address. I observe a wise procedure has been adopted here in that the printed version is not truncated, while on the other hand the shortened version delivered to the meeting aims at the practical brevity enjoined by the circumstances, and thereby goes far to avoiding the weariness which must result, even in the best of papers, from the attempt to convey to the audience a mass of detail through that member the ear which, as Heraclitus holds, is a bad witness. I cannot too strongly commend the practice of providing a printed copy to all hearers in a room which, is not destined to fame for its acoustics, so that lame brother ear may be held by halting brother eye. The second Act of your play ends with the response to the Address, which custom lays upon the Patron, if he be present. Here I daresay you will, without scruple, give this much credit to my predecessors, that experience in the role of Chairman taught them at all events the precious art of brevity.

By this time some relaxation from the concentrated review of the year is due, and you proceed to the final part



of your programme,—the informal inspection of a number of exhibits, varied in character like the interests of the Society, but representing in many instances the latest aspects of zoological, botanical, geological, philological and antiquarian research. Such is your programme, and it seems to me admirably adapted to combine executive business with learned disquisition, and the recognition of research with the appreciation of its fruits,—in fine to be a procedure worthy of a Society of your standing and repute.

You will be thinking that if I am to live up to the record of brevity which I have just commended in any predecessors, it is time that I should turn to the matters arising out of the General Secretary's Report. On this subject, however, I really do intend to be brief. I fully appreciate, as we all must, the difficulty of the times through which we are passing, and the discouragement that depression in the world outside must bring to those who are anxious to see the activities of the Society expanding and to take their part in the process of expansion. We may take heart from the fact that even in these times the good work of the Society has been in large measure maintained. If the production of the Journal has not been as regular as one could desire of so essential a feature of your activities, this is a matter which is being rectified by your Council, and in other respects your output is most creditable. The *magnum opus* is, of course, the Kashmiri Dictionary¹ which was shown to me when I came here the other day. Its completion after 30 years of strenuous labour adds fresh laurels to the chaplet of your veteran member, Sir George Grierson². Apart

¹ A Dictionary of the Kashmiri Language (1932) compiled by Sir George Grierson from materials left by the late Pandit Isvara Kaula.

² Sir George A. Grierson, O.M., K.C.I.E., Ph.D., Litt.D., LL.D.



from this, publications in the *Bibliotheca Indica*¹ have made available to the reading public still more of the treasures of Eastern literature which it was one of the earliest objects of the Society to unveil.

If I say that in mere point of numbers the Society has suffered less than usual at the hands of the great Reaper, I must not be thought to minimize the loss to the Society of such members as Mr. Vepin Chandra Rai,—our senior member, who joined the Society over half a century ago,—and Mr. Macnair² who, though a late-comer to our ranks, was by himself an institution in Calcutta, and was held in the highest esteem and affection by great numbers of his fellow-citizens. Nor can I forget the tragedy which deprived the Society and the Province of the life of Robert Douglas³.

In conveying the congratulations of the Society to those who figured in the Honours Lists of the year, I had intended to make no individual reference. But the Society would not easily forgive me if I pass over, without comment, an honour bestowed since the year under review ended on one who has deserved well of the Society,—I mean our late President, Colonel Sewell⁴. When, within a few months from now, Colonel Sewell leaves India after a quarter of a century of work here and on the neighbouring seas, to take up the leadership of the Sir John Murray Oceanographic Expedition, the good wishes of this Society will go with him, and we hope that his monumental work⁵ will in due course be

¹ Catalogue of Works relating to Indian Culture.

² G. D. Macnair.

³ Vide page 145.

⁴ Colonel G. R. B. Seymour Sewell, M.A., Sc.D., F.R.S., F.R.A.S.B., I.M.S., C.I.E., formerly Surgeon-Naturalist to the Marine Survey of India and Director, Zoological Survey of India.

⁵ *Geographic and Oceanographic Research in Indian Waters.*

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supplemented by another volume of equal importance to Science and honour to the Society.

The Society already possesses a remarkable collection of busts and paintings. The latter are not all specially related to its history, but the former are exclusively the effigies of great men who have taken a leading part in the Society's work from the early days. During the year a fine bust of the doyen of Indian Philology, Sir George Grierson, has been added to our collection. The venerable scholar may feel that even thirty-five years after his departure from India, he is not forgotten in the scene of his labours, and that in his eighty-fifth year he is still gratefully remembered.

ALL ancient institutions worthy of the name have their¹ established traditions and customs. And there is in our venerable Society a practice of removing, once in twenty-five years, most of the outward and visible signs of scholarship from this historic hall to make place for a banquet in celebration of the passing of another long stage in our career. This is comparable, perhaps, to the Hindu custom of abstaining from all forms of study on the day sacred to the Goddess of Learning², *Dulce est desipere in loco*. Some of us might have forgotten our Horace, but if by the succinct phrase *in loco* the poet meant a qualification not only of place but of time,—and this is borne out by the well-known rendering “a little folly now and then is relished by the wisest men”—then time and place are peculiarly suitable for our laying

¹ Speech at the Special Anniversary Meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 15th Jan., 1934.

² Saraswati.



aside the aspect of the scholar this evening; for the place is the Society's own home, built for them, on a site provided by the old East India Company's Government, one hundred and twenty-six years ago and inhabited by the Society continuously ever since. The occasion marks the passage of a century and a half since a small company of scholars met together at the invitation of Sir Robert Chambers to found our Society and to inaugurate those meetings which, in their early days, assembled under the presidency of Sir William Jones in the Grand Jury Room of the Court at Fort William.

Properly regarded, such an occasion should be both symbolic in nature and ceremonial in form,—the essence of the ceremonial being the creation of that common atmosphere of feeling and understanding in which an ideal may be more clearly visualized and an aspiration more deeply felt. To put it another way : a ceremonial meeting is not the appropriate place for giving or receiving detailed instruction but should have for its aim the cultivation of a mood.

For these reasons, I do not propose to indulge in any reflections on the individual features, important though they be, of the Society's long career as outlined in the most interesting address of the President. I would rather notice broadly some of the salient features of to-day's celebrations,—“broadly,” because while the eye is the instrument best suited to the leisured assimilation of detail, the organ to which I must appeal to-night, the ear, is more apt for the perception of general principles.

In the first place then, let me recall the stress that Indian philosophy has laid on the evanescence of all things in this material world. Empires decline, dynasties fall, great men and small pass on, and institutions once firmly established come to an end. Notwithstanding

changing times,—and has any other period of equal length been so fruitful of changes as the period 1784—1934?—the Society has managed to survive in vigour a century and a half of arduous labour. I am not sure that we fully realize how little of institutional life has come down to us from the days before the French Revolution. That there are still extant Academic Societies, Museums and Universities antedating that event cannot be gainsaid, but their number is comparatively limited. Here in India not many institutions remain unaltered from those remote days. The very Indian Empire in its present form has only half the Society's span of years. Survival is dependent on vitality; and in all human affairs the test of vitality is activity. It is, therefore, a proof of the past activity of the Society that it has been able to survive till to-day. For the last ninety years our membership has mostly oscillated between three and five hundred; and though it went beyond this maximum during a brief period between 1925 and 1932, it is within the same limits that we find ourselves now. Periodical fluctuations in membership have not, however, interfered with the general rate of progress since the foundation of the institution. We are justified in concluding, therefore, that the Society has well maintained its health and vitality despite advancing years.

And what of its activities during the third half century of its existence? Have we anything to show comparable to that series of giants who were associated with the Society's work in the beginning, in the days of Sir William Jones and his immediate successors, whose records are to be found in the pages of our Centenary Volume? The President has brought forward an imposing array of names of scholars outstanding in the fields of the Natural Sciences and of Philology, and it



would not be difficult to add to his list. It is gratifying—and may even come as a surprise to some,—to note that the Society is able to cite from amongst the members active within its ranks during the last fifty years, more than a score of men who have won for themselves a place in the world's encyclopaedia of scholarship,—men who have helped materially to mould modern views in science and in letters. That this is not an empty boast is strikingly and abundantly proved by the addresses that have come to us from centres of learning all over the world. I venture to think that it may be something of a revelation to many members to “wake up” as it were, “and find themselves” in the person of their Society “famous”,—to hear the warm praise bestowed upon its work by learned bodies in distant countries,—the praise of the Zoological Society of London, of the Linnean Society for its work in Botany, of the Prussian Academy for its Indological researches and of representative institutions of four continents for its labours in the Geological, Anthropological, Archaeological and other fields. Can it be that the old saying “a prophet is not without honour but in his own country” applies to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal?

Another aspect of this anniversary is the gratifying demonstration that it affords of the intellectual solidarity of the world. I understand that no addresses or congratulations were invited by the Society and that all the messages and tributes received have been spontaneous. Some sixty-five institutions, representing nineteen countries, have expressed their good wishes in messages which constitute a rare testimony to the esteem in which the Society is held in the world of scholarship to-day. We are particularly happy to welcome here to-day Monsieur Delacour of the National Museum, Paris, and Mr. Alfred

Ezra, representing the Zoological Society of London of which he is Vice-President. It is also gratifying to see the number of Societies from India and Ceylon participating in our celebrations. A dozen of them are represented either by personal attendance or by messages. The Ceylon and Assam Societies have deputed their Presidents to be with us, and Bombay and other Indian centres of study are also well represented here.

From all this it is very evident that the Society has both a national and an international significance, and the citizens of Calcutta would do well to consider in what way they could take a greater share in the support and the prestige of the institution established so long in their midst. According to the traditional formula, any one who is anxious to promote the progress of science and literature is eligible for membership; technical or academic qualifications are not indispensable. We must of course have our scholars, our specialists and our workers, but we are equally in need of patrons and supporters. In this respect I have noted with satisfaction the traditional connection of the order of Ruling Princes with the Society. A considerable number of them have always been members. It would be a happy thing if this tradition could be widened and made permanent and if the day might come when the name of no substantial Ruler in this country would be missing from our Members' List,—to the great benefit of scholarship in this vast country. If it is too much to hope that the Members' List should be a complete directory of the aristocracy of the country, social and intellectual, it is at least reasonable to expect that an organisation of the standing which this Society enjoys, and one pursuing as its object the study of all that is produced by Nature or made by man within the limits of Asia, should draw its main support



from sources not confined to the municipal limits of Calcutta.

It now only remains for me to congratulate the Society on a brilliant past and to wish it an equally brilliant future. The secret of real success in a body of this kind is disinterested effort. In the realm of mind we are all brothers. May your labours for the future be marked by the same unselfish zeal and enthusiasm that have distinguished them in the past. Only by these qualities will enduring results be obtained. I trust that it may be vouchsafed to the Society to inaugurate to-day a new period of its life,—a period worthy of its distinguished past and of the promise that the present holds,—so that when once more, after another half century has gone, our successors assemble to review the period then closing, they may still be able to say with truth, as we are happily in a position to say to-day, that a worthy tradition has been worthily followed.



III

ENGLISH EDUCATION¹

LET me begin by thanking you all for the welcome you have extended to me on the first occasion of my coming among you as your Chancellor, and for the warmth of the terms in which it has been expressed. I fully recognize that, whatever may be the position in other countries, in India the post of Chancellor is no mere titular honour but a position carrying with it serious duties and responsibilities. It is for this very reason, as it seems to me, that there may be solid advantages both to the University and to Government in the statutory provision which requires one man to double the roles of Chancellor and Governor. Embarrassing as the position may sometimes be to the holder, it affords to either body an interpreter to the other of its aims and methods. University and Government alike have their definite responsibilities under the Act, but as both are prompted by the same ideal, "The Advancement of Learning", there is no very obvious reason why these respective responsibilities should lead to antagonism. It will be my earnest endeavour, while I am your Chancellor, to ensure that the friendly relations of mutual understanding which were established in the time of my predecessor shall continue and develop, and to that end I can assure

¹ Speech at the Convocation of the Calcutta University, 25th March, 1933.



you that the good offices which my dual capacity enables me to exercise will be at the disposal of both, to smooth over such differences as may from time to time arise and to promote the interests of the University and of education generally in this Province, in both of which, alike as Chancellor and as Governor, I am keenly interested. Having this as my inspiration, I am emboldened to express the hope that the University will find me not less sympathetic and helpful than my predecessors.

The Syndicate and Senate, as was only to be expected, have given expression to their sense of the menace which the cult of terrorism offers to the progress of true education and, indeed, to the advancement of the general interests of the country. I trust that they will not permit their disapproval to stop short at mere expression, but that they will actively exert their influence over students and guardians alike to counteract the insidious poison of this pernicious doctrine. I would also take this opportunity most heartily to endorse what has fallen from the Vice-Chancellor this afternoon on the subject of participation by students in active party politics generally. Interest in the social and political problems of the day is one thing,—the students of to-day are the voters of to-morrow and the study of the various problems of citizenship can hardly be taken up too early,—but active participation in political conflicts is quite another thing and cannot be indulged in without detriment to those qualities, both of intellect and of character, which it is the principal aim of a University education to foster. I would most earnestly appeal to all those whose studies are as yet uncompleted, not to allow themselves to be diverted from the purpose which brings them together in schools and colleges into, what must be to them at present, the barren wastes of municipal or national polemics.

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As we have been reminded by the Vice-Chancellor, the University has during the past year suffered serious losses by death and by retirement. We remember with gratitude all these members of this Senate, distinguished in their various spheres, who have contributed to the good name of the University and thereby to the service of the country. Their memory cannot but stand as a challenge to the present generation to emulate their achievements and to equal or surpass them in their contribution to the changing requirements of the times.

We are particularly loath to lose the services of Professors so distinguished in their own line as Sir Venkata Raman and Colonel Green-Armytage. Sir Venkata Raman has already left Calcutta for Bangalore to join his new appointment as Director of the Indian Institute of Science. He is the first Indian to be selected for that post, and though his loss will be a serious one to the University, we are glad to think that he is not cutting himself completely adrift from us. Colonel Green-Armytage is leaving India to take up an appointment of eminence in his profession in London, and in his case we can only console ourselves with the thought that Calcutta's loss will be London's gain. On the other side, the University is to be congratulated on having secured the services of eminent lecturers from India and from outside to bring to our graduates the fruits of their own experience and research in many fields.

The Vice-Chancellor has referred to certain important changes, favoured by the Senate, in the regulations governing the curriculum of the Matriculation Examination. Of these, perhaps, the most far-reaching as well as the most controversial is the provision for instruction through the medium of the vernacular. This is a matter of very great importance to the future of Bengal and one



on which strong views are held and cogent arguments can be adduced on one side and the other. It is a matter calling for the most careful consideration of Government, but I shall make it my object to see that the proposal is dealt with as expeditiously as is consistent with the importance of the issues involved. Considerable discussion there is bound to be, and I have no doubt that the Hon'ble Minister will give opportunity for the elucidation and, if possible, the solution in conference of any points of difficulty that may emerge.

I have learnt with interest that the University is studying the possibilities of Sir Daniel Hamilton's proposals for the employment of young men in co-operative work, rural reconstruction and the development of agriculture. I shall be glad to see the conclusions at which the University's Committee of investigation arrive.

So far I have confined myself to commenting upon a few of the many points which caught my attention in the Vice-Chancellor's interesting address, and I do not claim the merit of any great degree, either of originality or of vision, for the comments which I have felt prompted to make. I am free to acknowledge—and I do so with regret—that during the twelve months that I have been in Bengal I have remained so fully occupied with other matters that it has not been possible for me to devote to University affairs the time and thought which the subject demands. I hope in the coming year to be able, in some measure, to supply the omission not only in what may be regarded as the sphere of the University, but also in the sphere of Education generally. From what I read and hear and see I am convinced that there is much to be done, much that calls urgently for investigation, improvement, and much that can only be accomplished by the co-operation of all the authorities interested in the development of

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a sound educational system. That much has been accomplished in the past I do not doubt. It must be a source of pride to all concerned in the administration and teaching of the University—and it is a matter of sincere satisfaction to Government also,—that in certain directions the University of Calcutta has made rapid and definite progress in recent years. In post-graduate teaching and research, development has been particularly fruitful. You have among you investigators who have earned reputations extending far beyond the boundaries of this province and country. You have provided the necessary facilities for many of your ablest graduates to continue their studies under expert guidance. All this is good and the University may justly be proud of it. But there are other aspects of our educational system which we cannot regard with complacency—aspects which vitally concern us as a University, as a Government, as a Province, and as a people.

No one can study the latest general survey of Indian education, the report of the Hartog Committee¹, without being driven to the conclusion that while Bengal may lead all the provinces in the number of her educational institutions, she no longer enjoys her old position of pre-eminence in the quality of the training these institutions impart. There is evidence, which I am afraid we cannot ignore, that Bengal no longer leads the way in education. It is the fact that in the open competitive examinations our youths no longer hold their own. Can one doubt that the standards of the Universities in some of the other Provinces are higher or that their schools and colleges are on the average better equipped and manned than ours? Leaving out of account comparison

¹ Hartog Committee Report 1930-31, on Educational Reforms. The Committee was presided over by Sir Philip Hartog.



with the other provinces, what do comparative figures for Bengal alone show? In the five years ending with the year 1931-32 our colleges increased from 44 to 51, but the numbers of students on the rolls fell during the same period from over 25,000 to just over 21,500. Does not this betoken a dissipation of effort? And if that is the position with the colleges the position with the recognized schools is still worse. The number of high schools in Bengal is greater than that of any two provinces put together, but their general standard is undoubtedly far too low. No school can give proper training which has not at its disposal adequate financial resources for staff and equipment, yet the enormous number of our high schools reduces at once the average fee income and the average grant that is available to each so that most of them must exist precariously, unable to offer terms which the best teachers may justly expect, or to provide the equipment necessary for a wide range of studies.

This is a very serious problem, for the results of the system are not confined to the academic side. It is not merely that too many of our students come up ill-trained and ill-prepared, but that a great number of them finish their educational career without having had the least chance to acquire those characteristics of mind and character which alone can make them useful in the public life of their country,—independence of judgment, habits of discipline, of self-restraint and of co-operation, tolerance and understanding of other points of view, initiative and enterprise, readiness to shoulder responsibility, and the patience of true wisdom. In the future,—the very near future—when Bengal is called upon to undertake the responsibilities of an autonomous province, these are the qualities which she will demand of

her sons and daughters. My fear is that if they are not developed in school and college they will not be developed at all.

And again, are we not now coming round to the view that our present system of training, the somewhat narrow, uniform, literary training that is given in our schools, is responsible, in some measure at least, for the accentuation of our present economic and social difficulties, the widespread unemployment, the distress of the lower middle classes, the failure to create and take advantage of new avenues of honourable industry and business? Many boys come to school and go on to college because they cannot find anything else to do. But when they pass out of school and college they are little better off and have the added grievance of an education that proves disappointing and deceptive.

I have alluded to the Hartog Report,—Sir Philip Hartog is not one who need be suspected of being out of sympathy with Indian educational ideals and Indian Universities. Let me now give you a quotation from a book¹ which I have recently been reading,—of one to whom this University owes much. “The two Universities of Calcutta and Madras have become two huge factories for mass production of graduates. As if these were not enough, a number of new Universities have recently cropped up in quick succession.....This inordinate insane craze—almost a mania—for securing a degree has been working infinite mischief—it has become almost a canker eating into the very vitals of intellectual life and progress.” And he goes on to explain that “A serious drawback incidental to, and I am afraid almost inseparable from, the present ill-understood and misconceived notions of University training is that the young man thus

¹ *The Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist*—Sir P. C. Ray.



turned out betrays, as a rule, lamentable lack of initiative, resourcefulness and pluck when he is thrown upon the world and has to fight his way through it. While there is a gain in quantity, there is a corresponding deterioration in quality." These are not my words. They have fallen from one whose own academic record is of the highest distinction and whose independence of outlook no one would like to question.

Now, these problems exist and no one can shut his eyes to their existence. I mention them to-day, not because I have any ready-made solution,—still less in any spirit of criticism or with any intention of imputing blame. As I have said on another occasion, we have to a large extent inherited a system which has given good service in its day, but has now outlived the period of its maximum utility. The point that I am anxious to make to-day is this:—in the system of our higher education three authorities are concerned,—Government and the two Universities of Calcutta and Dacca. As matters stand, no one of these can hope, single-handed, to solve even those problems with which it is itself primarily concerned. Taking the problem as a whole, it is essentially a case for a pooling of experience and ideas. Matters like the overhauling of the examination system, the reformation of the school curriculum, the re-organisation of school and college education, the possibility of linking up University activities with practical experience in industry and commerce,—these are but a few of the problems for the successful solution of which friendly and intimate discussion between the three authorities interested seems to afford the best if not the only prospect. Take again a matter like vocational guidance, a subject to which the Vice-Chancellor has made reference to-day. Vocational guidance

would seem to be a matter primarily for the Universities themselves, professing as they do to equip their students for the responsibilities of life, but here again I am far from saying that Government may not be able to help.

So far as Government are concerned, I know that Government are anxious to enlist the co-operation of the Universities to the highest degree. We have of recent years seen matters tackled in this way with satisfaction to all parties concerned. Let us have more of it. How we are to proceed as regards each particular problem will depend on the nature of the problem itself, but what I am anxious to secure,—anxious both as Governor and as Chancellor, and anxious, if I may say so, as a well-wisher of the rising generation in this Province,—is that, however we may decide to tackle these problems we may work together for their solution and avoid cross purposes and misunderstandings in the pursuit of a common end. That is my message to the University to-day, and as I indicated at the beginning of my address, I am willing and indeed eager to do all that is in my power, in my triple capacity as head of the Government and as Chancellor of two Universities, to secure the smooth and effective working of any machinery we may together devise for the examination and solution of the vast problems that are before us.

But in looking to the future I must not forget the present or those who to-day have received in doctorates, medals and diplomas the hall-mark of a University training. To them I offer my sincere congratulations and good wishes. Some few, I do not doubt, intend to remain and seek higher honours in the branches of learning of their choice. Others—and they must be the great majority—are now going out into the world and going at a time when, if the economic horizon is still



clouded with difficulties, there would seem to be a good prospect of new life and fresh development for this Province under the political and financial arrangements outlined in the pronouncement of His Majesty's Government. To those who find themselves after years of preparation now on the threshold of a career, may I, in the University's name and my own, express the hope that they may be wisely guided and that the world may use them well ?

FIRST then let me say that your kindness and cordial¹ welcome have gone far towards allaying the apprehensions to which I have referred, and now that I am here I can truthfully say that I am glad of this opportunity of meeting you all and seeing your school. I listened with pleasure to your Principal's Report. It is gratifying to find so lively an appreciation of the benefits which both school and training college have derived from the support of Government and from the generosity of private benefactors like Sir Percy Newson. It is no less gratifying to meet with so genuine and whole-hearted a determination as obviously exists here to make the most of the advantages that are yours for the benefit of the communities whom you specially strive to serve. The Domiciled Community and the Anglo-Indians have served India well in the past,—and Government has not been unmindful of that service. They ask nothing better than to be allowed to serve India as well in the future as in the past. But whether they will be able to do so must depend partly at least on the educational equipment

¹ Speech at the Prize-giving of Dow Hill School, Kurseong, 19th September, 1933.

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with which they enter a highly competitive market. I do not say that with the best education in the world these communities can hope to maintain altogether the position of privilege which was their's in some branches of Government Service until a comparatively short time ago. But, as I see the future, there will always be room in India, in the services and outside them, for people with your traditions and your inherited gifts of character. And if it be true that in the future a good education will not of itself guarantee its possessor a position under Government, you may at least be sure that without a sound education—by which I do not mean mere book-learning—you will find it increasingly difficult to hold you own.

I am satisfied that the special needs and requirements of the two communities to which I have referred are well understood and catered for at Dow Hill. I fully agree that all who can should go right through the full scholastic course to the stage of the Senior Certificate examination ; a sound general education is now-a-days as necessary a groundwork for a girl as it has always been for a boy. When I say this, I do so fully realizing the strain to which parents in these hard times are put to keep their children at school. To parents, however, I would say that what is true of a whole people is true also of individuals,—money spent on giving the rising generation the best possible education is money invested in the soundest possible way. And you must remember that girls are expected to know and to be able to do so much more now-a-days than was expected a generation back. Girls' education has undergone a great change since the days—not very long ago—when motherhood was almost the only career to which an educated and cultured girl could look forward. Now almost every career is open to



your sex, and the whole system of girl's education has had to be remodelled to meet the new conditions. As yet the openings for women are not so great in the East as in the West,—though here also times are changing rapidly. Even in India careers are already open to girls, and I am glad to see that the fact is recognized and that facilities are offered at Dow Hill. I shall watch with sympathy the efforts made in this school to equip the women of the future for the careers for which they are best suited,—or perhaps I should say “for which each of them is best suited,” for I was glad to observe that it is recognized here how eminently desirable it is that each girl should, as far as possible, be treated according to her particular bent and encouraged to select the channel most appropriate to her individual capacity. You are fortunate in being able to cater for the wide field of studies which the pursuit of this ideal makes necessary.

I am glad to see also that you do not neglect the “out of doors” aspect of education. I had already met your Guides in Darjeeling last year and I was interested to see them here again. With the example of Victoria next door,—with its smart cadets and its keen Scout troop,—I should expect your Guides to be well above the average. From the references that the Principal has made to athletics and the training of games mistresses, I gather that proper attention is paid to this important side of school life,—a side which, I should imagine, is more, not less, important in India than in England. And with the growing appreciation of the value of physical training for girls there should be a growing field for the games mistresses whose early training is imparted here,—though there again I am sure the school is right in giving them a second string to their bow in the form of a training in domestic science.

And this brings me to the other sphere of your activities here,—the Training College. I believe the College is doing a very useful work in sending out year by year a small but steady supply of teachers for the European schools of the Province. How far it is sound that one school should have to bear the brunt of all the practice teaching inseparably connected with a training college is of course a serious question, and it is becoming more and more obvious that the expansion of the activities and scope of the College will necessitate its removal to Calcutta.

There is only one other topic on which I wish to touch. European education will very shortly come under Provincial and inter-Provincial Boards. The object of these Boards is to co-ordinate Anglo-Indian and European education throughout India and to advise the Education Ministers of the future autonomous Provinces of India on all the problems connected with that education. This should prove an important and extremely valuable proposal from the point of view of the communities concerned. To a community whose members are liable to frequent transfers from one Provincial area to another, anything that will tend to secure uniformity of standards and methods in the schools of the different Provinces must be in the highest degree welcome, while from the point of view of the schools themselves, the interchange of views and ideas should be of benefit and should facilitate the adaptation of their curricula to the needs of the communities they serve. I am happy to say that these Boards,—though the proposal is the outcome of very recent discussions,—are already in process of formation.

Now I promised to be brief and I mean to keep my promise. But I have just a word to say to the members of



the school whose day, after all, this mainly is. I am not going to play the part of the "heavy uncle" and tell you that you should make the most of your school-days as they are the happiest period of your life. To begin with it is not always true—it also seems somewhat uncalled for to indulge in Cassandra-like prophecies on the point !—and in any case no normal boy or girl likes to have it "rubbed in". But I am glad to see that you all look happy. And I am not surprised at this, for you have much here to help you to be happy—a situation, the beauty of which not even two hundred inches of rain annually can permanently obscure,—fine buildings and every facility for the pursuit of sports and hobbies. I hope you are happy here—as happy as you look—and I hope that even if it is to be your lot to disprove the heavy uncle's gloomy prophecy by being even happier when you grow up, you will always look back with affection and gratitude on your days at Dow Hill and remember that, even when you leave, her reputation is still, to some extent, in your keeping.

THE Principal has said that the school is nearly one¹ hundred and fifty years old, and it is true enough that the present foundation dates back to the distant year 1798,—the year of the Taking of the Bastille and the commencement of the French Revolution. But I like to think that your history is really older even than that. Your written records do, as a matter of fact, date back a few years earlier, to the year when the Select Vestry of what was then "the new" Church,—St. John's Church,

¹ Speech at the Prize-giving of St. Thomas' School, Calcutta, 12th December, 1933.

just beside Government House,—took upon themselves the management of the Calcutta Charity Fund and the school which that fund financed. And that fund seems itself to have originated in an indemnity paid by Mir Jaffar¹ in 1757—the year of Plassey—to make good the losses occasioned in the plunder of Calcutta by the Nawab Siraj-ud-Dowlah² in the previous year, an event in which the then existing “Charitable Institution”—your fore-runner—suffered a complete, if not temporary, eclipse along with other manifestations of the western trader’s activities. If the history of your school which I have seen is correct, there is good ground, it seems to me, for asserting a claim to continuity with that Institution which existed, certainly as early as 1731, for the support and education of the children of British subjects in indigent circumstances. Many an institution and many a noble family has successfully maintained a claim to antiquity on bases less substantial! You boys will, therefore, forgive me if, in spite of your youthful faces and your practical present-day clothes, I look upon you as a direct link with the Calcutta of two hundred years ago, an impression to which your venerable buildings to some extent lend colour.

But if in some respects you provide an interesting link with the past,—with the very beginnings of the British connection in Bengal,—I am glad to find that in all that matters, you are by no means content to be a mere relic of a past, however, interesting. The Principal’s report, to which I have listened with considerable satisfaction, shows that you are fully alive to the necessity

¹ Mir Jaffar, the Commander of the Nawab’s army, was the brother-in-law of the late Viceroy, Aliverdi Khan.

² A grandson of Aliverdi Khan and the last pre-British independent ruler of Bengal.



for keeping abreast of the times. It is the report of a school with high ideals conscientiously pursued.

I fully realize the difficulties by which all schools—and especially schools of this kind—are beset in these anxious days. I sympathize very deeply with you in your difficulties. I especially deplore the fact that it has been found impossible to hold an election to the ranks of the foundationers this year. I understand that this decision of the Governors—a decision to which I am sure they would not have come unless obliged—must have brought keen disappointment to many who had entertained a hope of securing the remission of fees which a “free boardership” confers. I am afraid, however, that on the subject of finance I can only say this. Government, like every other institution in the land, have their own financial troubles. In the general shortage of funds, education—especially primary education of girls—has been treated as tenderly as was consistent with the performance of our bare duty in other spheres of Government activity. The reduction in our contribution has been forced upon us by our own financial position, and I can assure you that every endeavour has been made to spread the reduction over the various schools which receive such aid from Government fairly and in such a way as to cause the minimum of hardship. That we have been completely successful in this endeavour, it is not for me to claim, but I have received a good deal of evidence that other schools are suffering at least as severely as you are. I know, too, that five boys from this school and five girls from the girls’ section are receiving assistance from the European Schools Emergency Fund. And though in the meantime I can hold out no hope of an immediate return to the scale of Government contributions of the recent past, I can assure you that if sudden prosperity were

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to descend once again upon the Provincial exchequer, there is nothing to which I and my colleagues would more readily allocate additional funds than the cause of education in the Province.

I am afraid that this is somewhat cold comfort, but you will hardly have expected me to go further this afternoon. And I am glad to find that in spite of financial difficulties there is much in the Report that makes cheerful reading. Thus it is satisfactory to hear that the health of the school has been reasonably good,—very good, I venture to say, considering the locality in which the school stands and the environment in which many of the pupils are compelled to spend their holidays. Again, I have heard with gratification what the Principal has said regarding his staff. The tone of a school,—the spirit pervading it,—depends in very large measure on the staff and on the extent to which they identify themselves with the ideals of the school and the interests of the pupils. Little can be expected from a school where the teachers confine themselves to the subjects for the teaching of which they are immediately responsible. It is rather through their activities outside the class-room that teachers come to know and influence their pupils and win their confidence. I have not the least doubt that the success of this school in many directions is to be ascribed in great measure to the keenness of the staff and their willing co-operation under a Principal who knows how to inspire devoted service.

It is almost a truism that education is concerned with moral and physical, as well as intellectual training. It is encouraging to find that the Principal attaches due weight to all the three aspects. The foundation and the history of the school ensure that the spiritual side of education will not here be neglected. Religious teaching is the



surest foundation for moral training, and I gather that the Diocesan Inspector was entirely satisfied with the work of the staff under this head. On the physical side the school has a fine tradition for keenness which seems to have been well maintained during the last twelve months. I am particularly glad to see that scouting has come into its own again in the school. When Sir Stanley Jackson was here with you two years ago, I find that he urged the scouts of the school to "pull themselves together" and not to allow themselves to be outdone by their younger brothers, the Cubs. His words apparently did not go unheeded; but I am also glad to see that the Cubs have not yielded the palm to their elder brothers too easily, and that they can still win a trophy (for the second year in succession too) when they want to.

On the intellectual side the results attained by pupils of the school in various public examinations reflect credit on staff and pupils alike. The tradition of the school is that it does not concentrate upon training for academic examinations and professional careers only. It gives a vocational bias to those who want it. From this point of view the results of the Board of Apprenticeship Admission Examination are particularly gratifying. I hope that the prevailing depression will not be allowed to affect the popularity of these vocational classes, for apart from fitting the boys for a particular kind of work, such classes must tend to teach them to be more handy and useful generally,—and that, it seems to me, is what is going to prove of greatest advantage in the long run to the type of boy who comes here to school. I would only say in passing that I presume that the boys chosen for these classes are selected because they appear to have a bent in that direction.

And now, I am afraid I have not left myself very long for my remarks to the members of the school. I congratulate those who have won prizes during the past year. With that encouragement may they go from strength to strength and win the greater prizes of life when their time comes. But to them and their less successful companions I would say that the winning of prizes is not the sole end of existence, though you may gain much in the struggle to win them. I will not repeat at length—though I entirely agree with it—the excellent advice my predecessor gave you two years ago. It boiled down to this : “work when you work, and play when you play : and never at any time loaf around doing nothing.” You will feel,—you older boys at all events,—that what you ought to aim at getting out of school life is certainly not merely a prize or two,—nor even merely a certain amount of knowledge, likely, one hopes, to be of value to you in after life. What you may reasonably expect as the most valuable gift your school can make you is the development in you, in the community of work and play and by association with masters of the right type, of qualities,—the qualities which go to the making of a “man”. Though you may have won prizes in this subject and that, I make bold to say you have not been educated unless you have learnt the importance of industry, the value of unselfishness, the need for honesty of mind and spirit. And by “honesty” I mean not merely honesty in the ordinary sense, of refraining from theft or falsehood,—I assume that honesty of that kind is yours already ; the honesty I have in mind is that frankness with others and above all with yourselves which can best be described perhaps as freedom from all insincerity or “humbug”. That form of honesty is less commonly met with. We could do with a great deal more of it in the world to-day.



And in all this, to aid you, you have the traditions of a century and a half. That must be at once a chastening thought and an inspiration to you. The excellent reputation which the school has won through all these years is in the keeping of the present generation. If you cannot add lustre to its records,—and I hope that it may be given to some of you to do so,—you can at least hand on that reputation untarnished to those that follow, and when you yourselves have left, do nothing in your after-life to bring discredit on your old school.



IV

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY¹

SEVENTY-eight years ago the Act which established and incorporated the Calcutta University was passed. In the life of a University three quarters of a century is a short period, but from the small beginnings of 1857 the Calcutta University has gone from strength to strength, and has developed into one of the most important Universities in the East, while its achievements in scientific and historical research have won for it a reputation beyond the limits of the East. Its contributions to the development of secondary education throughout the province have been far reaching. Mistakes and shortcomings there have undoubtedly been. These, it may be said, are common to all human institutions, and this is primarily an occasion for contemplating the positive achievements of the University. I am encouraged to believe that in the future the University will steadfastly pursue its ideal, "The Advancement of Learning."

It is an invidious task to name individuals among the benefactors of the University. But there spring to the mind the names of such men as Tarak Nath Palit²,

¹ Speech at the Calcutta University Foundation Day Celebrations, 24th January, 1935.

² Eminent barrister of the Calcutta High Court, famous for princely donations to the Calcutta University College of Science.



Rash Behari Ghose¹ and Asutosh Mookerjee². The Universities of a country are the natural leaders of its thought: and so we find that the social, political and cultural history of Bengal during the last half century has been profoundly influenced by the Calcutta University, and that men and women intimately connected with it have taken a very important part in the initiation and organisation of new movements for the improvement of the conditions, and the raising of the standards of life. To illustrate this it is only necessary to mention such names as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee³, Mahendra Lal Sircar⁴, Gooroo Das Banerjee⁵, Sir Jagadis Bose, Sir P. C. Roy, Sir Brajendra Nath Seal and Dr. Meghnad Saha. These are but a few of the illustrious sons of the University who for their high achievements in different walks of life are honoured far beyond the confines of their mother country.

The observance of Foundation Day by a University, College or School, gives an opportunity to successive generations of paying their homage and publicly manifesting their gratitude, to its founders and to those who in their various ways have contributed to its healthy

¹ Notable advocate of the Calcutta High Court—authority on Law of Mortgage in British India. Famous for munificent donations to the Calcutta University for the promotion of Art and Science.

² Renowned Judge of the Calcutta High Court and the most distinguished Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University.

³ Unrivalled Bengali novelist of the last century—popularly known as the Sir Walter Scott of India.

⁴ Famous physician and the founder of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.

⁵ Another renowned Judge of the Calcutta High Court—and the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. Universally respected for his unquestioned impartiality of character and rigid adherence to Brahminic culture.

growth and development. It rightly focuses attention upon the ideals and example of those from whose efforts spring the privileges enjoyed through membership of the body, be it University, College or School. This is the first occasion on which the Foundation Day of the Calcutta University has been commemorated, and as your Chancellor, I am glad that I was able to accept the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor to join with past and present members of the University in its celebration. It is fitting that on this day we should concentrate our thoughts upon men such as those I have already mentioned, who have shown themselves true benefactors and true sons of the University in various ways. "Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us."

A University is judged not only by its success in equipping its students for the crafts and professions, not only by its contributions to scholarship and science, but also by the influence which it exerts upon the imagination and the character, by the ideals which it fosters, by the extent to which it has helped to enrich and fulfil the lives of its *alumni* and through them the corporate life of the community. It is towards these ends that members of the University, now and in the future, may direct their energies. They have received a goodly heritage ; let them see to it that it is ever handed on undiminished. Let them strive to do all that is necessary to maintain themselves in fitness of body and vigour of mind. Let them uphold the traditions of service which the great benefactors of the past have handed down, but not content with merely maintaining these, let them make their own individual contribution to the enlargement of the spheres which a University can serve ; let them ensure that by their corporate efforts the University may become a yet more powerful instrument,



for leading and directing public opinion and the life of the country along sound healthy channels.

A great task of national regeneration lies before Bengal, and the University can, if it will, play a vital part in it. I would ask each one of you to see that it does so, so far as in you lies. Seldom before have we stood in greater need of discipline, organisation and courage than we do to-day : discipline to order our lives towards desirable goals, undeterred by partisan counsel and unmoved by insidious influences that are working to warp immature minds ; organisation to pool our resources in every sphere of life and direct them for purposes of national regeneration ; courage to face squarely the problems that confront us and take the course that reason and reflection recommend, without flinching or fear or caring for the plaudits of the hour.

It was such qualities as these which assured success to the efforts of those who built up this great University from small beginnings in a space of time which is small compared to that which has attended the growth of the older Universities in England, and we owe it to them to prove ourselves worthy of their example. By so doing we can give practical proof of our gratitude for their benefactions, the fruits of which we now enjoy, and to commemorate which we are to-day assembled.

WE have met at a time when we are bound together by¹ a common sense of loss. Were this a mere occasion of ephemeral rejoicing, possessed of no deeper significance, neither you nor I would have the heart to enter

¹ Speech at the Foundation Day Commemoration of the Calcutta University, 30th January, 1936.

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into it. But this day stands for more than mere display ; it commemorates the beginning of a great endeavour which we are called by duty to maintain, and in remembering the high services of those who have gone before us let us pause to pay homage to the memory of one whose life was the very pattern of devoted service to his people—our late Sovereign, His Majesty King George the Fifth.

It is given to some men to comprehend and express in their lives the essential goodness of things—to value them not by the names with which they are labelled but by the measures of their good for mankind. If such be an attribute of greatness let us acknowledge it in him. Born of a long line of Kings to the highest order of an ancient aristocracy, he upheld and adorned the dignity of his high calling and strove to gather about him all that was best and noblest in his Empire. Destined by history to guide his country through the bitter years when nation clashed against nation, he stood forth as a shining example of true patriotism, yet failed not to win the respect and affection of friend and enemy alike. Called to reign over a world-wide empire in an age of ferment, of new found liberties and awakened consciousness of race and class, he proved himself at once the sure guide of rising democracy and the trusted guardian of the rights of his subjects. He has enriched the world by a truer conception of Kingship, a nobler ideal of aristocracy and an inspiring vision of the potentialities of a democracy that is both free and in the truest sense aristocratic. Thus in these latter years did he attain to that goal which he prized most, to be, and to be recognized as, the father of his peoples. Let us honour his memory, not as a thing that has passed, but as a living example that may long continue to inspire us all.



We pay our humble tribute of sympathy to the bereaved and vow our common loyalty to his successor His Majesty King Edward the Eighth—a King trained from an early age to discipline and service, and distinguished beyond his fellows by knowledge of his wide dominions and understanding of his diverse peoples. Nearly a year ago, as Prince of Wales, he made a national appeal in England for a thank-offering fund to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty King George the Fifth. The cause he chose was the cause of Youth, and I repeat one sentence of his speech as a fitting reminder of our duties to-day. He said on that occasion, "I can think of no cause that makes so national an appeal as the cause of the younger generation."

Well, in our varied callings it falls to us all to serve the King in different ways—but those who are giving of their best for the younger generation may rest assured that they are rendering to their King-Emperor a truly acceptable service.

With these thoughts I turn to speak of the University whose eightieth birthday we are assembled to commemorate. Eighty years sounds a long time in the history of modern Bengal, but it is a brief period in the life of a university. Memories are apt to be short, and events have moved with unprecedented rapidity. New knowledge, new discoveries, and new problems have crowded in upon you, and teacher, student and administrator alike would be more than human if at times they did not feel a sense of bewilderment. Yet your problems are not those of the modern world only. Some of them are age old, and will persist for all time, so long as men continue to ask themselves the age old question—what is the aim and nature of education? Some of your problems, arising as they do from the development of the

machine and the growth of rapid communications all over the world, are essentially modern and without precedent to guide to their solution. Others again are problems such as the universities of the western world had to face long ago during their long transition from the status of pious foundations, with a restricted purpose, to the position which they now hold in the national life of the modern state.

Unlike so many of the universities in the western world, the University of Calcutta started from its outset as an institution called into being by the deliberate act of the State. But a national university is not the product of a single generation and cannot be created by executive action alone. It is a growth that springs from an intellectual and moral conviction of its necessity—a conviction strong enough of its own merit to permeate the minds and mould the actions of a people.

If at times in the day-to-day administration of its affairs you are met by problems of disunity or by obstacles that seem to be placed in your way by vested interest or sectional ambition, do not think that yours is a new experience or that other universities have overcome such difficulties by any quick and easy remedy. A university stands for a longer view and a broader outlook upon life than that which would diagnose every evil as a new one and apply the latest remedy, only to discard it in disgust if it does not immediately succeed. It is the function of a university to provoke thought and call forth ideas. But it does not accept them merely because they are new or attract, for the moment, the greatest degree of popular attention, nor does it forget them merely because they are old. A university stands throughout the years to bear witness that the search after truth is continuous, and that high



endeavour and patience must go hand in hand. It is in this spirit that the University of Calcutta will face its future and will inspire its scholars to face the problems of their own lives.

Many of you, perhaps the great majority present to-day, must by force of circumstances look to your training here as a means of fitting yourselves to earn a livelihood. But the University can offer you something more than that. The time will come, all too soon for most of you, when the business of your daily lives will claim the whole of your thoughts and energies. Your work—perhaps your lack of work—your successes or your disappointments will close in upon you and cut off the rest of the world from your vision, unless during these precious years of university life you have learnt the way of escape—to see beyond your surroundings to penetrate beyond appearances and to value an idea not by the name with which it is labelled, but by the measure of its good for the service of your fellow-men, your country and mankind.

More than twenty-three hundred years ago a great Greek philosopher expressed in these words his conception of the surroundings in which young men should be educated. "Then will our youth dwell in a land of health amid fair sights and sounds and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and the ear like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from the earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason."¹

To us, whose University is set in the midst of a teeming city, these words may sound like a far-off dream, conceived by men who lived a spacious life in a land of clean white stone, unclouded skies and an azure sea;

¹ Aristotle quoted by Cardinal Newman in his *Idea of a University*.

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but their essential message—a message of health and an ordered rhythm of life—is as true for us as it was for them. Here in Calcutta investigations have shown us how much is to be done, by teaching and prevention no less than by cure, to raise the standards of health and physique among the student body. I trust that those who are engaged in this work will receive from all who can help them a full measure of sympathy and support.

One word more before I close this birthday address. For the individual there comes a time when birthdays bring with them a tinge of sadness; but let there be no such sadness in this the birthday of the University. It has grown because it has answered a need among the people of this province and its very growth has called new aspirations and new problems into being. So long as it sets itself to face those problems and to call forth to their solution all that is best in the coming generation, it will not age with the passing of the years. Its youth will be renewed from generation to generation and its strength stand deeply rooted in the hearts and lives of the men and women of Bengal.

DURING the years that I have held this high office¹ of the Chancellorship of this University it has not been open to me to develop that degree of intimate and personal relationship with its academic activities, and with those who direct such activities in detail, that more leisured times might have made possible. I have, however, through the medium of the Vice-Chancellor, endeavoured to keep in touch with developments of

¹ Speech at the Annual Convocation of the Calcutta University, 17th February, 1937.



importance in the policy of the University, both academic and fiscal, and I have followed with special interest those measures which seemed to me calculated to have the greatest effect on the lives and character of its alumni. Though the office of Chancellor goes automatically to the Governor of Bengal, I may fairly say that I have never regarded the Chancellorship as a mere appendage to the Governorship. On the other hand, enjoying as Chancellor the advantage of exceptionally easy access to the Governor, I have always been in a position to lay before the latter, as the head of the administration, what I have conceived to be the legitimate views of the University.

Looking forward across the very brief span that now separates us from responsible government in Bengal, when the Governor himself will normally be relieved of any responsibility for the policy of the State as regards the University, I cannot but think he may still have opportunities for service in the discharge of the office of Chancellor.

I have no desire now to dilate upon this theme or indeed to encroach at all upon matters that may fall within the sphere of party politics—but aware as I constantly am of the profound—I may justly say revolutionary—changes that are upon us in the principles of government in this province, I cannot help asking myself in what direction this University can make the greatest contribution to the national life of Bengal. I am tempted to answer as follows—by striving to raise the general level of quality among those who come under its influence and by inculcating a true conception of constructive leadership. I have used the word quality deliberately because in these days quality is not a characteristic always associated with mass production. To combine the two, demands the continuous application of high standards—

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both in the selection of raw material and in the rejection or remodelling, at every stage, of components that fail to come up to specification.

I make bold to state, as a historical truth, that the advancement of a people by their own efforts depends in the main upon two things—first, the average standard of quality attained by the people themselves, and secondly their inherent capacity to throw up, from time to time as circumstances may require, leaders of the requisite calibre.

For more than a century and a half it has been a constant feature in the life of this province that its development has been conditioned by reaction to outside influences. Extraneous influences have sometimes inspired, sometimes restrained, sometimes provoked : and in turn leaders among the people of Bengal have appeared sometimes as enthusiastic propagators, interpreters or adapters of western ideas, sometimes as ardent reformers chafing at the slow progress of change, and at other times as rebels against the whole conception of external authority in any form. But always, or nearly always, reaction to or against external influence has been the stimulus and the focus of interest. In all that concerns most closely the daily lives of the people of Bengal, that stimulus is going to be withdrawn—that focus of interest is going to disappear. No doubt there will be a tendency to keep the stimulus alive, to search and scrutinize the activities of future governments for some trace of the hidden hand of external authority ; but such tendencies will not bring any nearer to solution the problems of health, education and economic well-being for which a remedy will be demanded by the people from governments responsible to themselves. The things that matter are no longer to be had from



a third party as a boon to be sought or a concession to be wrested, they are to be devised and constructed by those among the people who aspire to leadership. The days of leadership against something are passing, and the call will be for leadership to something. I venture to say that if the Universities cannot produce men to answer that call they will fail to fulfil their function in the national life.

It is the function of a leader, as I understand it, to try and bring out the best among his people and not to hesitate to correct their weaknesses—for every nation and every community has its weaknesses. If leaders of the people try to follow the easier course—to appeal to weaknesses or to encourage tendencies that they know to be adverse to sound development, then the result will not be progress but decline and disaster.

I have put these thoughts forward because it has been long in my mind to do so, and I can think of no better place to speak them out frankly than in the precincts of this University.



V

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WHEN last year I addressed you for the first time in Convocation, I was conscious of several very grave disadvantages under which I was labouring. I knew very little about you. I had not met the University officials,—except for the Vice-Chancellor himself. I had not seen the University, except to drive up to the door of this fine Hall. I had seen nothing of the students and knew as little of their mode of life and their peculiar difficulties.

Your officials I have met both here and in Calcutta, and I can assure you that they lose no opportunity of keeping their Chancellor informed as to the anxieties and aspirations of the University. As for the University itself, I have been able to pay a visit to certain of your buildings which I was particularly anxious to see. Though my visit was necessarily more hurried than I could have wished, I think I went through all the principal rooms comprising the Physics and Chemistry laboratories, and was able to gain a very clear impression of the work that is being carried on there. I myself, at a period which now, alas, seems very remote, spent about six years as a student and research worker in various chemical and physical laboratories in Scotland and in

¹ Address at the Convocation of the Dacca University, 22nd July, 1933.



Germany, and I can confidently say this—that I should have counted myself very fortunate to have had available in my student days facilities comparable to those provided in your laboratories here. I am satisfied that you have all the conditions requisite for an output of work of a really high standard. The Library also impressed me very much as regards both the number and the range of the books which it places at the disposal of students.

So far as the students go I am afraid that, for reasons not of my choosing, I have still not been able to see much of them at their sports and studies here or elsewhere. I think, however, that as a result of many talks with those who have their interests much at heart, I may lay claim to a better understanding of their outlook and problems than I could have had twelve months ago. I feel especially what the attainment of a University degree means to some of them, and the sacrifices that they and their families willingly undergo to that end. If that sacrifice is not in many cases to be thrown away, it is important that all concerned should appreciate and keep clearly before them what a University stands for.

A modern University such as this serves a double purpose. From the standpoint of some, its function is the bearing upward of the torch of learning—the advancement of knowledge and the spread of culture. For others, and they must always form the large majority—particularly in times like these—its purpose is to provide with the necessary equipment those who aspire to earn their livelihood in one of the learned professions or in some service to which entry is gained by the passing of competitive tests. A University can never retain its freshness and vigour unless it is able to cater for, and to attract at all times, some whose circumstances enable them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. On the

other hand, success must be measured for the majority by a practical test, and for this purpose degrees and diplomas must be won in circumstances which make them a real test of scholarship, and they must not be cheapened from a quite intelligible but utterly mistaken desire to popularize a particular institution. I hope the time will never come when academic distinctions, of whatever kind, conferred by the University of Dacca will fall, in the estimation of the competent critic, below the standard generally set in the educational world.

You have already heard, in the Vice-Chancellor's interesting address, a review of the University's work and progress during the year that has just closed. These are times when, speaking generally, the most we can hope to do in our Universities is to 'carry on',—to keep our activities going. I think we may conclude from the general tenor of his remarks that in that respect, at all events, the University has been successful. The past session, indeed, gives cause for satisfaction on several grounds.

As regards numbers we have not yet reached the turn of the tide, but at least the ebb seems to be running with less vigour, and if examination results are taken as a criterion, we have made up in quality for some of our loss in numbers. I am informed that the percentages of success in the case of the University's ordinary degrees were very decidedly higher than previously, while in the higher examinations there was an increase not only relative but actual in the numbers of successful candidates, the figures being the highest ever yet attained since the University was founded. In this connection I welcome the encouraging advance achieved by the students in the last session.

As the annual report once again shows, research is

being vigorously pursued. I have been particularly interested to see the lines on which the department of Chemistry is working. It is satisfactory to find that the University is so keenly alive to the practical importance of agricultural research in this Province. It is a wise course from every point of view to link the work of the University with the problems which vitally concern the well-being of the great majority of our population. If I cannot go all the way with the Vice-Chancellor and promise that the provision of teaching in Botany and Bacteriology will be financed by Government whenever funds are available, it is not because I do not recognize the importance of this development both to the University and to the Province. I would go so far as to say that I know of no direction in which the University could better extend its activities when it has the money to spend. But I cannot at this stage promise—and I should not like the University to nourish the hope—that this or any other particular scheme of the University can at the present stage be given a first claim on any surplus that may become available. We have of course first to secure our surplus. Only when we are sure of that will it be profitable for Government to weigh the merits of this scheme and that, and consider the claims of the various departments.

Government have, in any case, a peculiar interest in the University of Dacca—in its development and in its efficient working—if only because Government, as the custodians of the provincial revenues, are responsible for seeing that the Province obtains the highest possible return for the money invested in the University. As you know, two-thirds of our revenue in the University of Dacca is derived directly from Government, and if the interest on balances is included, two-thirds becomes

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three-quarters. Even if no other than financial considerations entered into the matter, the fate of the University could never be a matter of indifference to Government. I should be prepared to put the matter much higher than that, but I am dealing at the moment with the financial side. Let me then reiterate that Government understand fully their obligations towards the University, and in my capacity as Chancellor I shall always endeavour to ensure that any legitimate claims that you may put forward are not at any time subordinated to others unless the latter are really entitled to take priority.

The University's desire for expansion is natural and indeed creditable, but for the time being any such thing must either be financed from sources other than provincial revenues or be postponed until Government are in a position to consider new schemes involving expenditure. Government are certainly not in a position to do that now. This year, as last, Government are faced with a deficit little short of two hundred lakhs of rupees,—and that, despite a cut in salaries of 10 per cent for sixteen months and a cut of 5 per cent current at the moment. Apart from this, I am sure it is not generally realized how drastic Government's economies have been. In the sphere of education, posts have been abolished in some of the major colleges, and posts of all sorts have been reduced in status and pay. Many senior posts have been left unfilled and practically all new developments involving additional expenditure have had to be definitely postponed *sine die*. So far as Dacca goes, the rather magnificent conception of the scheme for a University in Dacca was launched before the war upset all our standards of costs. The existing financial settlement left the Province with only the most inelastic resources. This has hitherto conditioned the problem to such an extent



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as to make the process of adjustment more difficult than it would otherwise have been. It is therefore satisfactory to find that the University has understood the difficulties with which the Government are faced, and has by means of retrenchment and of voluntary cuts in salaries effected savings of over half a lakh of rupees. This willingness to face realities, however unpleasant, is a welcome sign. I hope the University and its Staff will have the satisfaction of seeing present difficulties successfully tided over by their efforts and their sacrifice. As you all know, Government are hoping and working for an equitable financial settlement under the future constitution, but meantime it is, I think, unprofitable in our days of adversity to attempt to fix the scale on which our University may ultimately develop.

When I addressed the Convocation of the University of Calcutta a few months ago, I indicated my view as to the great need for taking stock of our educational position and for endeavouring to settle, by means of a conference of all concerned, the lines upon which our course for the more immediate future should be marked out. I feel that there is ground that could most usefully be covered at such a conference. I would, for example, suggest that one of the principal objects that a conference should aim at securing is economy of effort and of expenditure by the avoidance of unnecessary overlapping and wasteful competition. I hope that such a conference may take place in the near future, that it will be thoroughly representative, and that its proceedings will be marked by a determination on all hands to recognize the realities of the situation.

I DO not intend to take up a great deal of your time for¹ I know that you will be anxious to hear the address of the distinguished speaker who is to follow me—the first Chief Minister of Bengal. The Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq is no stranger to this University, having been associated with it since its foundation. It is therefore particularly appropriate that he should give the first Convocation Address to be made under the new constitutional order.

Standing before you to-day as Chancellor for the fifth and last occasion, I am reminded of the changes which the hand of time has wrought. I have seen two Vice-Chancellors lay down the reins of office, and to-day in the place of the last Vice-Chancellor we welcome a new one, for the first time to this hall. In welcoming Dr. Majumdar² to his place we recognize in an exalted position one who for some years now has worked amongst us, and in whom, from our knowledge of him, we may justifiably repose every confidence for the future. I take this opportunity of thanking him for the very kind references he has made to me in the course of the most interesting and eloquent speech to which we have just listened. The Vice-Chancellor's address is indeed full of interest to those familiar with the University, but I think that to the wider public before whom to-day's proceedings will eventually come, the most encouraging part of his review is that which is devoted to the future development of the University. It is some time since we have had to talk of anything but the cutting down of expenditure, as we had to consider nothing but minimum requirements and the means by which, with a little pruning here and a little sacrifice there, we could

¹ Address at the Convocation of the Dacca University, 14th July, 1937.

² Dr. R. C. Majumdar, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D.



struggle along until better times hove in sight. I would not be so imprudent as to say that prosperity is yet firmly and permanently established. But released from the necessity of preserving a miserly attitude, the University can now look about it with a new feeling of confidence. The acceptance by Government of the report of Dr. Jenkins¹ will enable you to look forward to a period of years in which you will have leisure and opportunity for the prudent development of your activities. It is a source of profound satisfaction to me personally, that the release of the University from a position of humiliating and cramping dependence should have come about during my tenure of office as Chancellor.

Reference has been made to a sum of money collected during the time of Lord Lytton towards the re-institution of the Professorship of Sanskrit. I can assure you that I have not been oblivious of the existence of this sum, and if I am not in a position to-day to make a formal announcement of its transfer to the University now that a Chair of Sanskrit has been established, I have every reason to believe that the formal transfer of the investment to the University is only a matter of time, provided that the University itself is in a position to guarantee the permanence of the Sanskrit Chair.

It is of much interest to learn of the success which is attending the University in its endeavour to promote the study of agricultural science. In India as a whole, and especially in the part of this Province which the University of Dacca is primarily designed to serve, there is no more important subject. It may often be a mistake for a University to pay too much attention to a particular subject; and to speak of a "specialist University" would

¹ Dr. Walter Allen Jenkins, D.Sc., of the Indian Educational Service, now Director of Public Instruction, Bengal.

be a contradiction in terms. The dangers of specialisation are obvious, and threaten the individual no less than the corporate body. I have heard research defined as "getting to know more and more about less and less until one finally knows everything about nothing." Nevertheless there is no harm in judicious emphasis on an important subject, and in bringing the study of Agricultural Science to the fore, the University will be rendering to the community a service which, from its circumstances and environment, it is particularly well qualified to render.

I am interested also in the project for the establishment of a Medical College. In commenting on this, and indeed on all matters affecting the University in which my Government also is interested, I feel I should give some explanation of the position of myself as Governor and Chancellor under the new political system. The Chancellor of the University is one to whom the University looks as its titular head, and as one who, besides discharging certain statutory duties, is in a position to use whatever legitimate means lie to his hand for the good of the University when need arises. Such influence as I may possess through the opportunities which I have, both as Chancellor and Governor, of meeting and talking with persons of influence and importance in this Province or elsewhere, have always been at the service of the University. My position as Governor does, however, preclude me from approaching on your behalf one body of much influence in the Province—namely the Council of Ministers. The Governor has shed whatever share of responsibility he may have borne in the past for administrative matters of this kind. Whatever hopes may have been kindled of Government assistance by those responsible for previous



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administrations, it is to none but the Hon'ble Minister and his colleagues that the University may now look for the realisation of such hopes. My interest in the welfare of the University is however in no way diminished, and I can assure you that in the future as in the past, this interest will find expression in all the legitimate ways and means at my command.



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AN occasion such as this reminds me how multifarious are the demands made upon the services of a Governor in India. In part they call for the bestowal of blessings or the payment of compliments, and as regards this portion of one's activities inclination may not always march abreast with duty. The present occasion is one on which inclination and duty coincide. I remember, sometimes with a tinge of regret, the days when my own preparation for life was based on the contemplation of a scientific rather than an administrative career. Although it finally came about that I elected to tread administrative paths, I have never regretted the scientific training which I received during some of the most impressionable years of my life, because that afforded me an understanding of the best methods of approach to the solution of scientific problems which years of the hurly-burly of administration have not entirely extinguished, even if to my misfortune it may have become somewhat dimmed. I have not regretted it because I think that the detached outlook of the scientist may often be an asset to an

¹ Speech at the inauguration of the first session of the National Institute of Sciences of India, Calcutta, 7th January, 1935.

The Institute was founded in accordance with the scheme devised by the Academy Committee appointed at a meeting of the General Committee of the Indian Science Congress Association, held at Bombay on the 3rd January, 1934.



administrator. Conversely I think that knowledge of practical administration must often be helpful to a man of science, and this was forcibly brought home to me when listening to the admirable and most interesting address delivered by Dr. Hutton¹ at the inauguration ceremony in this Hall². Dr. Hutton is not only a distinguished scientist but also a distinguished administrator, and his address was punctuated by repeated illustrations of the application of scientific researches to the practical problems of everyday life.

The popular conception of a scientist is that of a man who pursues truth for its own sake and with no interest, or at any rate no selfish interest, in the practical application of his discoveries. I can conceive no better way for scientists, each pursuing his own special line of research, to correlate their investigations and to turn them into practical channels than the formation of some central institute by means of which their ideas can be pooled and brought into relation with each other. I can see no limit to the field of usefulness which this new Institute of Sciences can cultivate, for its purpose is to co-ordinate the work of such academic bodies as have already been created in various parts of India and as may be created in the future. Many members of this Institute are Chemists and will be aware of the remarkable progress made in synthetic chemistry during the present century. These members may wish to employ some form of synthetic action in building the structure of this academic body. Others who are Anthropologists or Psychologists will naturally apply the lessons of their sciences to the aspects

¹ Dr. J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., D. Sc., of the Indian Civil Service, formerly Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, Assam.

² The opening meeting of the 22nd Session of the Indian Science Congress on the 2nd January, 1935.



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of social life and human organisation presented by this new institution. Those who are Botanists or Agriculturists, understanding all the mysteries of seedtime and harvest, may be expected to be valued gardeners in this academic grove.

If the creation of this new body has given rise to some birth pangs, the medical members will know that this is nothing strange, and they may be able to prescribe a regime of life calculated to promote healthy growth and to inhibit the normal disorders of youth and adolescence. And as man is after all a member of the animal creation, it is probable that the Zoologists may find in their own science, matter which may be of help to this new body. Even the Mathematicians should have some ideas on such aspects of structures and numbers as must be manifest in the life of an academic body. In short, all the sciences represented in your institution are capable of contributing to the wise guidance of your body corporate. Even the Geologists, who at first sight might seem to be rather out of the picture, should be able to help, for their study of fossil bearing strata may enable them to detect and to avert any premature fossiliferous tendency should this begin to manifest itself. With great diffidence I suggest that this consideration may have been one of the reasons why you have chosen as your first President¹ a distinguished representative of geological science whose special knowledge of ancient petrification makes him so fully aware of the necessity for mobility and vitality.

To turn from a consideration of the component parts of this new body and of the way in which they can

¹ Dr. L. L. Fermor, O.B.E., D.Sc., (Iond.) A.R.S.M., M.Inst.M.M., F.G.S., F.R.S., F.A.S.B., Director, Geological Survey of India, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

function to the best possible advantage of the whole, I should like to attempt a very brief summary, as I see it, of the sequence of events which has led up to this gathering. A philosopher has rightly characterized the great intellectual transition in the west, contrasting the medieval with the modern conception of life, as the transition from an attitude in which man interpreted nature by tradition to an attitude in which he corrected tradition by observation of nature. The first organized step in this direction in India may be said to date from the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in this very city in 1784. The second step dates from the middle of the last century. In 1857 the Calcutta University was founded, followed at short intervals by a number of other universities. In addition there were a series of great scientific surveys during the nineteenth century. The third step was the meeting of the Indian Science Congress for the first time in 1914. To-day, as a fourth step in the progressive organisation of modern science in India, we are met together to inaugurate the National Institute of Sciences in India. It seems to me that this gradual, and yet at the same time accelerated progress is regular and natural and therefore highly satisfactory. The various steps forward indicate the gathering of sound fruit produced as the result of steady labour. There is in this evolution no putting of the cart before the horse.

That this Institute should be the result of steady and healthy growth augurs well for its future and for the quality of its work, because it will have to deal with gigantic problems. Science in the modern sense of the word has been implanted in India through the largely accidental external influences of colonisation, aided by free communications with other parts of the world which have themselves developed differently and at a different

pace. This vast country, which is inhabited by at least 350 million people, is as regards the illiterate masses, in much the same condition as Europe during the middle ages. To those who have the time and the inclination, it may afford an interesting field of speculation to consider what will be the result of the interaction between this modernism of the few and the traditionalism of the many. In the various countries of Europe the two views have contended and striven side by side for centuries, sometimes with extreme bitterness. As a result of this running fight the solution has taken different shapes among the different races and nations, and in some places a satisfactory compromise has not yet been found. What the result will be in India cannot be foreseen, and it is wise never to prophesy unless one is certain. There is a humorous if cynical cliché on this subject to the effect that "He who bets on a certainty is a rogue : he who does not is a fool." This much, however, is sure, that the eventual result will largely depend on the wisdom, insight and intellectual calibre of those representing the ideas and sciences which this Institute has been founded to promote. Dr Hutton, in the course of his inaugural address, said that scientists should beware of valuing themselves and one another too highly and of supposing that because a man knows a great deal about one subject he is therefore the more fitted to express an opinion on others. This wise admonition has been put in another way by a witty though possibly somewhat jaundiced thinker who once said that it should never be forgotten that if a learned man is stupid, he can be so learnedly stupid as to be much more dangerous than the ordinary stupid man in the street. My good friend, Mr. Van Manen¹, told me the other day of a striking epigram of

¹ General Secretary, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.



eight words which expressed the same idea : "learning without thinking : useless; thinking without learning : dangerous".¹

I am sure from my personal observation that at its inception, at any rate, this Institute will be served by members blessed with wisdom as well as learning and that, in consequence, its future is bright. I would only add, if I may, one word of caution and of exhortation. I know from my own experience how, by reason of their training and of the nature of their work, men of science tend to become strongly individualistic in their outlook and impatient of any form of constraint or discipline. The success of this Institute will depend very largely on the extent to which this very natural tendency can be held in check. No one, I am sure, need be apprehensive lest his work may suffer in freshness, originality or vigour from loyal adherence to the aims and objects of this Institute. On the contrary, union is strength, and inasmuch as the boundaries of science are constantly expanding and the interdependence of the individual sciences constantly increasing, I trust that this Institute will continue to be, as I am assured it is to-day, truly representative and that its members will all derive from it strength and inspiration and a greater capacity for service. In inaugurating this first session of the National Institute of Sciences of India I wish it all possible success.

¹ Confucius.



VII

FINE ARTS¹

CALCUTTA'S interest in the fine arts has manifested itself in the past in various ways. If our statuary can perhaps claim only to be no worse than that of most other cities in the Empire, we have in the Victoria Memorial a building of which, both for itself and for its contents, we may be justly proud. Coming nearer home, I think I may say that the promoters of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, in their annual exhibitions, have set an example and founded a tradition which it would be a worthy aim to follow. The annual exhibitions of the Government School of Art have won a high reputation. The Society of Fine Arts, Calcutta, also held a number of valuable exhibitions, but these, unhappily, have been discontinued since 1927. Other centres—Madras, Bombay, Lahore—have held their exhibitions for many years past and the Simla Fine Arts Society has a record of more than half a century to its credit. Of recent years we have had here in Bengal nothing quite on the lines of the exhibitions to which I have just referred, though artists from Bengal have now laurels as far afield as Bombay, Delhi and London, and there has been a feeling—a very natural and laudable one—that Calcutta also should endeavour to set up and establish on a permanent

¹ Speech at the opening of the Academy of Fine Arts Exhibition, Calcutta, 23rd December, 1933.



basis the periodical exhibition of the artistic output of the year in India. It was left to the President to take the initiative in the matter, and it is largely owing to his pertinacity and to his generosity that plans have now matured. The Inaugural Meeting was held on the 15th of August of this year, and I believe considerable doubts were entertained at the time as to the advisability of attempting to carry plans into effect during the present cold weather. Encouraged, however, by the warm response which their proposals received, the promoters took their courage in both hands and decided to hold an exhibition before Christmas. I am confident that when you have seen it you will agree that a bold decision has been justified by results.

Invitations to artists could not be sent out till November, but a most gratifying response has ensued. About a thousand works have been submitted by artists—I use the word in its widest sense—from all over India, men and women, followers of many schools of art, drawing inspiration from East and West. The main classes exhibited are naturally paintings in oils and in water colour, but, besides etchings and work in black and white, there are appreciable contributions in sculpture, architecture and poster work. The collection will be found to be fully representative and, what is even more important in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, it attains in certain classes a very high standard indeed. In addition to original work by the artists themselves, the Committee have decided to add a further attraction in the form of a loan collection of notable works of art in the possession of private collectors in India. As a result, canvasses by some of the world's noted masters are on view to the general public,—in some cases, perhaps, for the first time. This feature,

interesting in itself, should be valuable for purposes of comparison with more recent work.

It is not only from the artists themselves and from private collectors that the scheme has received support. The number of foundation members of the Academy under whose auspices the annual exhibitions are to be held has already exceeded a hundred, and we are indebted to His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal, and to a large number—more than a score—of the Ruling Princes of India and other Patrons of Art for their generous support and for their liberal contributions to our prize fund.

Only those who have been personally engaged in the organisation of an Exhibition of this kind can appreciate the infinite labour—some of it descending very nearly to drudgery—that has to be performed before there can be anything for the public to see. In the present case the receipt and judging of the exhibits, the preparation of a catalogue, the hanging arrangements, the financial administration,—these and many more things have had to be carried through under great pressure of time. I feel confident, however, that it will be generally admitted that a high measure of success has crowned the devoted labours of the promoters.

It may be said that the foundations of this project have been well and truly laid. It now behoves the promoters to do all in their power to ensure that continuity and expansion which will make our annual exhibition in Calcutta one of India's important artistic events. The venture has my warm sympathy and support, but it must depend for its success on the co-operation from year to year of a wide circle of men and women of culture. I can only express the hope that in sixty years' time from now our successors in Calcutta will



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be celebrating a jubilee similar to which the Simla Fine Arts Society celebrated last year.

I am happy to see by the size and quality of to-day's gathering the warm interest which, in spite of the many counter-attractions of the Christmas season, Calcutta evinces in the Fine Arts. The criticism has sometimes been levelled against our city that its absorption in commerce, politics and sport has left little opportunity for the pursuit of the liberal arts. This Exhibition and its successors will afford an answer, should any be necessary, to any such criticism.

VIII

PHYSICAL TRAINING¹

PHYSICAL education must not be regarded as just an addition to literary or vocational education. It must be looked upon as an integral part of education—a part without which no education can be called liberal or national. I have said before that India has nothing to gain from a slavish imitation of systems in other countries. It has, however, everything to gain from an intelligent study of their history and an intelligent selection of those features which are of a universal application. Looking back on the history of Europe we see a time in the civilisation of Greece and Rome when perfection of the body as an aim in education went hand in hand with the perfecting of the mind. Those civilisations were submerged for centuries under the onrush of barbarism, and for many hundreds of years the pursuits of the mind were divorced from physical achievement in the field of action. Knowledge and culture became the preserve of men who sought either to shut themselves off from a world with which they were not in sympathy, or to control it by their superior intelligence, leaving to crude and uncultured men the life of action. During those centuries education was the preserve of the priest and, with a few shining exceptions, was despised by the soldier

¹ Speech at the Annual Demonstration of the Government Physical Training Centre, Calcutta, 19th March, 1936.



and the man of action. But with the emergence of national life came the realisation of the true meaning of a liberal education. In the days of Queen Elizabeth there was a teacher¹ known to history as one of the founders of national education in England. The Queen herself was his pupil, and he was a man of wide and deep appreciation of letters—one who wrote with singular feeling of the delights of study and good teaching. This, however, is what he had to say regarding liberal education as a whole ; "Therefore, to ride comely ; to run ; to leap ; to wrestle ; to swim ; to dance comely ; to sing and play instruments cunningly ; to hawk ; to hunt, to play at tennis and all pastimes generally, which be joined with labour, used in open place, and in the daylight, containing either some fine exercise for war or some pleasant pastime for peace, be not only comely and decent, but also very necessary for a courtly gentleman to use."²

In those days, however, and for centuries afterwards, a fully liberal education was the privilege of the rich and the powerful. It was not until some sixty or seventy years ago that a national and universal system of education was established in England. And to begin with, let us frankly admit that it was not liberal. There, too, in the course of years a change has come about. It has been felt that the training of the body, the cult of health and physical as well as mental happiness, is an essential aspect of a national system of education. In Germany they called their schools *gymnasias* even in the days when the German student was supposed to be distinguished more for his abilities at books than for his all round equipment as a man, and whatever we may think of the results of German education, no one

¹ Roger Ascham—1515-68.

² *The Scholemaster* by Roger Ascham.

will question the reality of the unity, vigour and discipline in the national spirit of the country. Here in India the development which we are now striving for is true to history. Education in our schools and colleges passed early in the last century from a religious to a utilitarian purpose. It still remains to be made liberal, and the inclusion of the cult of health, the cult of perfection of the body, cult of discipline and self-reliance, is a natural and inevitable step in its progress.

There is room in every school for the presence of a trained physical expert, who understands the laws controlling physical development and is able to devise for every boy within the school a routine of activities which will give the maximum benefit to the development of his body as well as to the development of his mind. I need hardly impress upon you that this work requires detailed study and scientific knowledge, and it is because of that fact that the existence of an institution such as this is justified.

I notice with pleasure the participation of trained women teachers in the demonstration this morning, and I hope that this is an indication of a growing realisation that it is just as essential to attend to the physical development of a girl as it is to the physical development of a boy. The system of girls' education in this country is far more fluid than that of boys, and its reverence for pure book-learning less deep; for that reason there is an excellent chance of physical training receiving its due place in the girls' school without much difficulty. I hope that in the many new schools which are being established, this question will not be forgotten. Given co-operation from the public and the school authorities, Government hope to be able to ensure that there are skilled physical experts advising all school and college authorities,



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and that in the near future the untrained type of games and drill master will be a thing of the past. Let me say, however, that mere technical knowledge by itself will not suffice. The teacher of physical training must believe in the value of his message to his pupils and must strive to capture their imagination—to set them an example of leadership and comradeship that will produce good comrades and good leaders for the future among the boys and girls of the Province.



IX

VOCATIONAL¹

WE know each other and the work of the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes² at Kalimpong well enough to make this annual meeting a kind of family gathering where we listen to the Father of the Homes while he tells us of the doings of the year, the ups and the downs, the successes and the disappointments and the hopes and plans for the future.

We, who may perhaps regard ourselves as the uncles and the aunts of this big family, welcome the opportunity of taking counsel together and getting clear in our minds what we must aim at doing between now and the next family gathering to help the father and to keep the family nourished, healthy, happy and vigorous, with its ideals and aspirations undimmed. Dr. Graham, has given us the story of last year, and we are all glad that in the main it is a happy story.

As regards the finances of the Homes, I am sure we have all listened with concern to Dr. Graham's account of the gradual falling off in subscriptions during the last ten years. It has been a difficult period for everybody, and this year the task of restoring the level of subscriptions,

¹ Speech at the Annual Meeting of the Calcutta Committee of the Kalimpong Homes, 27th February, 1935.

² Founded in 1900 by the Very Rev. J. A. Graham, C.I.E., D.D., who is still the Hony. Superintendent.



urgent as it is, is not, I fear, made easier by the fact that there have recently been three large calls on the philanthropy of the charitable section of the public in India. I refer to the Viceroy's Earthquake Relief Fund, the Centenary Fund of the Medical College and Their Majesties' Silver Jubilee Fund. These large calls which have been made on the public, coupled with the fact that the economic depression is only just beginning to lift, make it perhaps imprudent to calculate on receiving any marked increase of income during the current year, but I hope everyone will do what he can to second Dr. Graham's efforts in this direction.

I do not think that we can expect any contribution from the Silver Jubilee Fund itself, as the purposes of the Homes fall outside its ambit, but I hope that the world's recovery from its prolonged attack of economic indigestion will be steady, and that by next year we may be getting increased financial support from subscribers. I have heard Dr. Graham described as the Prince of Beggars, and I have no doubt that he is keeping a princely eye on the situation and will extract as much as is possible when he judges that the moment is ripe. While there has been a gradual decrease in the amount of money raised annually by the Calcutta committee, it is at any rate some satisfaction to note that the subscriptions raised in India did not show any further reduction during the last complete year for which accounts are available and, though Dr. Graham tells us that so far this year there is a shortage, I trust that before the year is out this will be made good. I am not quite clear how far the reduction of subscriptions is due to a reduction in the amount given by individual subscribers or how far it is due to the number of subscribers having diminished. If it is mainly due to the latter cause, it

would seem desirable that the Calcutta Committee should organize a campaign to enrol fresh subscribers to replace those who have dropped out through leaving India or any other cause. The Heather Day proceeds, at any rate, are substantially better than those of last year, and so are showing a steady upward trend for which the Calcutta Committee is to be congratulated and the Calcutta public thanked. Another very gratifying thing, and one which speaks for the healthiness of the family, is that the financial help received from former pupils shows a steady increase.

Both Dr. Graham and I were at home last year, and we met at a meeting at the Goldsmith's Hall where a large and distinguished company assembled to testify to their interest in the great work to which Dr. Graham has dedicated his life. You must have been gratified to hear from Dr. Graham of the awakening of interest in England in the problem of Anglo-Indians since it is a problem which the British as a race should realize is one for which they have a great responsibility; not only for its cause but also for its solution. There has been so much ignorance and loose thinking—if you can call it thinking at all—about the “Eurasian” as he is still called, and many, whose sources of information do not extend beyond an occasional magazine article, probably still think of him as a person who combines the defects rather than the merits of the two races from which he is sprung. How wide of the mark this is we all know, and I endorse Dr. Graham's appeal to those who do know to see to it that they spread their knowledge when they return to Great Britain.

I am sure that the comprehensive lecture which Dr. Graham gave to the Royal Society of Arts, shortly before he returned to us, will be of lasting service to the



community. He dealt with the history and the facts of the Anglo-Indian problem and the way in which Anglo-Indians have made good again and again in various branches of citizenship, both in peace and in war. He gave one instance of the old ignorant prejudice by quoting from the proceedings of the Marine Society, London, in 1903 when it was considering whether Eurasian boys should be admitted to the Training Ship "Warspite". One of the governors vigorously protested that Eurasians were mentally and physically unfit to become British seamen. Nevertheless, three years later the Marine Society was persuaded to co-operate in the sending of Anglo-Indian boys to English training ships and the results have proved the falsity of the old prejudiced impression. The very first batch were reported on as possessing characters which stood high in relation to those of their shipmates, and as being the best mannered lads in the ship, truthful and the most amenable to discipline. Since then more and more boys have gone from the Homes for nautical training in the Mersey, and have consistently earned the highest commendation from the Admiral-in-Command.

I hope Dr. Graham will publish the whole of that lecture, either in the magazine or as a pamphlet, for it contains other interesting and valuable passages dealing with the successes of those Anglo-Indian children of the Homes who, when they have reached manhood, have had the opportunity of working side by side and in equal competition with Englishmen of their own station in life.

Much as these facts redound to the credit of the community and much though they should do, if they can be made known, to sweep away some of the misconceptions about the Anglo-Indian based on ignorance, yet I feel

that no small part of the credit is due to Dr. Graham and the Homes where devoted men and women have not spared themselves in their endeavour to provide an environment—physical, mental and moral—which will give the children a chance of developing into willing and helpful citizens.

It is a great pleasure to us all to have Dr. Graham back amongst us looking so much the better for his “busman’s” holiday—for I fancy, from what I have heard and read, that during his leave he worked as hard as ever for the cause to which he has devoted so much of his life. Even some twenty years ago the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Calcutta said that he considered Dr. Graham’s work to be the finest which any Englishman or Scotsman had ever done in India.

I AM very glad to be here to-day and to have heard from the Hon’ble Minister of the scheme which he has prepared for the establishment of this Agricultural Institute. I am particularly glad for two reasons: in the first place it marks the consummation of many years of planning and negotiations, and in the second place it is the outward and visible sign of a policy which the Hon’ble Minister has so much at heart.

It is a long time—13 years—since Government accepted the generous legacy of Kumar Basanta Kumar Roy, but the delay has resulted in this advantage, that in the interval the capital has increased from 2½ lakhs to over 4 lakhs and the endowment is in consequence now sufficient to finance a self-contained scheme without

¹ Speech at the opening of the Agricultural Institute, Rajshahi, 13th August, 1935.



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outside assistance. Nor has this time been a period of idleness ; many tentative proposals have been put forward and examined and, although the earlier projects were not found acceptable, they have all been of value in helping to shape the scheme, which has now been evolved to the satisfaction of the Ministry and its expert advisers—Agricultural and Educational—and of the Executors of the Estate, who have throughout been actuated by the desire to see the money spent to the best possible advantage, and have contributed in no small measure to the final result.

You will no doubt have read the Resolution, which was published a few days ago, outlining Government's tentative proposals for re-organizing the educational policy of the Province. One of the aims of this policy is to create a more practical and realistic environment for education generally, and to provide alternative courses of training suited to the temperament and capacity of the boys themselves and to the needs of the country. Its object is to equip a boy for the kind of career for which he shows special aptitude, and to help to direct and guide him towards that career. The present scheme suggests one way in which the problem can be approached. Under it the boy will first complete the usual High School course which will ensure that he has the requisite background of general education to enable him to profit from the specialized training offered him. Then, instead of proceeding to the ordinary University course which so often leads to a career which ends when a degree is obtained, he will, if he proposes to adopt agriculture as a livelihood, be diverted to this specialized training which aims at equipping him more adequately for this career, to his own advantage and to the benefit of agricultural methods and conditions. Not only this,

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but also those who intend to pursue their studies through the normal course at the college will have an opportunity of combining with them a practical training which will keep them in touch with the problems of the countryside and influence their outlook generally.

It is fortunate that the scheme should have matured at this particular time, so that the Hon'ble Minister is able, through the benefaction of a family which has done so much for this district, to put into practice at once a part of the principles which he believes should govern the future educational policy of this Province. Private benefaction has combined with the resources of Government in its different spheres to inaugurate an experiment which may well mark a turning-point in the educational policy of the Province.



X

ART OF TEACHING¹

I HAVE observed with interest and pleasure that the main purpose of this exhibition is the improvement of the actual teaching work in the various types of schools. Of late years in this Province a great deal of emphasis has been laid upon the necessity for reconstruction of educational control and administration. No one can deny that such reconstruction is important—I might perhaps say essential—before a permanent and satisfactory system of education can be established. I do not want to minimize the shortcomings of our present system, particularly in regard to secondary education, but it does seem to me that in our desire for reform we have tended to overlook the equally important fact that progress can only be attained when the actual teaching work in our schools is efficient and satisfactory. Legislation in the Council, or changes in the regulations of the University, may contribute to ensuring that the boys and girls of Bengal enter upon adult life better prepared and better equipped than at present, but in the long run nothing will be gained without improved work in the class-room itself.

Since the end of the last century far reaching improvements in teaching technique have taken place in the

¹ Speech at the opening of the Bengal Education Week Exhibition, Calcutta, 31st January, 1936.

West, and those improvements have been reflected in the results achieved. In Great Britain it is generally recognized that the average boy or girl upon leaving school is at least a year more advanced educationally than was the case twenty-five years ago. This advance has been made possible largely by better teaching and a more accurate knowledge of the laws governing intellectual development and the acquisition of knowledge. It is no longer sufficient that a teacher should know the facts that he is supposed to teach, or that a pupil should merely be able to memorize his lessons. The teacher must understand as well as know his subject and above all understand his pupils. A knowledge of child psychology is as essential to the teacher as is a knowledge of the properties of materials to the engineer. A whole literature has grown up on the subject of teaching, and ideas are rapidly changing. I have been told that it is now realized that if a normal child fails to understand its lessons, the fault lies not with the child but with the teacher. I cannot say whether it is yet an accepted doctrine that the teacher should be punished for the delinquencies of his pupils—but, if such is the progress of ideas, then those who teach normal children must watch the results not merely with interest, but also with very genuine anxiety.

What I wish to emphasize here is, that great as is the debt which India owes to the innumerable teachers who, according to their lights, have striven day in and day out to impart their learning to others, there is still greater and better work to be done by the adoption of better and more efficient methods based upon a more complete understanding of a child's mental and physical life.

The knowledge that much remains to be done to improve the ordinary teaching in our schools is not



of course new. You will all agree that if India is to achieve success in her efforts to attain and maintain national greatness, she cannot afford to adopt any save the best and most successful methods in the training of her youth. Exactly what those successful methods must be is not easy to decide. Because in America, Germany or England certain methods have proved successful, it does not follow that such methods can be precisely copied in India. There is much to learn from a study of the many experiments that have been carried out elsewhere, but a slavish imitation even of successful experiments may fail to lead to success here. Tradition, home environment, and actual teaching conditions are in this country radically different from what they are elsewhere. It follows that any application of methods proved successful under different conditions in other lands must be an intelligent application modified to suit local needs and not merely an imitation. India has yet to discover whether the methods of western teaching are best suited to the genius of her people. This will come not through the work of one or even a few people, but only through the devoted services of large numbers of enthusiastic educationists determined to experiment and evolve the proper system. If failures in that experimental work are to be minimized, an adequate knowledge of the work that has been done elsewhere is desirable, and a close co-operation with fellow workers here in India essential. Therein lies the justification for this Education Week and the gathering together of teachers from all parts of the Province.

Many of you are working in places not easy of access, and for the greater part of the year must of necessity be out of touch with teachers in other schools. Libraries and literature dealing with educational work are not

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readily available, and the problem of close co-operation with your fellow workers is more difficult of solution than in countries where communications are good and publications embarrassing in their numbers. To you this is a real opportunity of sharing experience and renewing enthusiasm, and I trust that you will return to your schools inspired with the desire to give practical expression to the ideas that you have imbibed here. You will have an opportunity of seeing the latest devices and appliances that are used to assist the teacher in his work—of witnessing model lessons, inspecting schools, and listening to teachers upon various aspects of juvenile education. One thing is quite certain and that is that none of you will be able to complain that there were periods during the week when you were necessarily idle. Adequate provision has been made for technical studies, general knowledge and subjects of interest to all. Whatever may be the problems in which you are particularly interested, you will find discussions and exhibits connected with those problems calculated to provoke thought and spread new ideas.

There is one other point to which I wish to refer. To many of you the model class-rooms, diagrams, pictures and other exhibits may strike as very wonderful but of no practical value because the limited finances of your school place it entirely beyond your reach. Such a criticism is partially valid. We are as fully aware as you are of the necessity of making more adequate provision for our secondary schools. The problem of school equipment has so far been almost entirely neglected owing to the existence of a still greater problem namely that of providing adequate salaries. Until the financial condition of our schools is far more satisfactory than at present, there will be little means



available over and above that required for actual remuneration. But effective teaching is not a matter of apparatus. Its lack makes your task still more formidable but does not prohibit a great advance being made upon present attainments. Much can be done by a teacher who will exercise his ingenuity and utilize the ordinary resources of the village and the school. Illustrations and models can be prepared by the boys themselves under the teachers' guidance. Parents and guardians can be interested in this aspect of a school's needs and local benefactors might be induced to present really useful articles and apparatus instead of the imposing but rather unpractical encyclopædias that are to be found in so many of our schools. You have a great task before you, and you are working under conditions that are far from ideal. We shall do our best to improve those conditions. How far it will be possible for us in the near future to make better provision for your schools I am not, unfortunately, in a position to say. It is possible, however, even under present conditions, for you to render great service to your country and your people by steady and persistent improvement of your everyday work in the class-room. If this Exhibition makes that achievement more probable it will have been well worth while.

It is not my purpose to-day to go back over the long¹ history of western education in this country, and I know that the arguments for and against it have been thrashed out a hundred times since the writing of Lord Macaulay's

¹ Speech at the Centenary Celebrations and Prize Distribution of the Barrackpore Govt. Park School, 17th January, 1937.

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famous Minute. But I am often led to wonder exactly to what extent these schools and colleges that were set up here, resembled their counter-parts in England, and when and how far their traditions have since diverged and differed. If one may judge from the school stories of the last century, I would say that the English school of the last century must have been a somewhat unpleasant place. Perhaps the school stories are exaggerated, the bullyings and thrashings laid on too thickly in order to maintain some interest in the reader. But on the whole, the students of those days appear to have led a fairly miserable life. By comparison, the schoolboy in this country has escaped many of the rigours of the English system.

Whilst the traditions of your school have been developing on the banks of the Hooghly, great changes have come over the English system of education on which it was modelled. The scope of studies in England has been both widened and brought into closer touch with life and current affairs—we hope without sacrifice of the ideal of scholarship. The process is no new one. It was over a hundred years ago that a famous writer of the eighteenth century wrote, "The least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar rules. The modern school-master is expected to know a little of everything, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of anything."¹ And since those days we have gone far.

Also, I think, the schoolboy in the West comes less into contact with the rod than formerly. Whether this is because the new education is more congenial to him, since he has a wider and more interesting range of subjects and is less inclined to let his attention wander,

¹ Charles Lamb.



I do not know. Certainly the devil that is in all school-boys is given a greater amount of free play on the football and cricket fields; and the scrapes and japes of his great grandfather who, as the books would have us believe, bullied his juniors unmercifully and swam the mill-stream at midnight, may have less appeal to him after an afternoon of strenuous exercise.

And here we have in this country one divergence from the West which we should consider carefully. Not many schools are ready to organize the leisure of their pupils as well as to direct the study of book learning. Long hours of the day are spent in the class-room and long hours of the night reading alone or with the private tutor. I am glad to note that ample reference has been made to the facilities for exercise and play. Not only is provision made for football, but also for cricket and athletics. There are I know many schools which take an interest similar to yours in these matters. But in the province as a whole, there is a great amount of lee-way to make up. I believe, however, that public opinion is at last being stirred, and that in the future we shall find more and more schools considering it their duty to pay as much attention to the physical well-being of their pupils as they do to their study and capacity to pass examinations.

On the last four occasions on which I have presided at the annual prize-giving at this school, I have attempted to address the boys rather than the grown-ups. I fear that to-day I have departed from that custom and that the boys themselves deserve some consolation. They may at any rate console themselves with the thought that centenaries only happen once in a hundred years—but apart from that there is one thing I have to say which, I am sure, they will find most interesting; and

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indeed it is a point on which schoolboys of all ages and countries have had the same opinion. And it is that I have asked your headmaster to give you a holiday of ten days in honour of the centenary, and on the clear understanding that he will not do it again for a hundred years, he has agreed to do so.



XI

FUTURE POLICY¹

It is a very pleasant duty that falls to me to-day—that of welcoming you to this conference on Education. We have been at some pains to make this Conference representative of informed opinion on higher and secondary education in this Province. We have amidst us not only officials of the Ministry of Education and the chosen representatives of our two Universities, but also a representative from Assam and a number of others whose claims to be considered well versed in matters educational no one would venture to dispute. It is a source of great satisfaction to me personally, that you have been able to accept our invitation, and that you will give us the benefit of your views and your experience. I feel that if, as a result of frank and friendly discussion in a gathering constituted as this is, we can arrive at some degree of unanimity as to what should be the aims and ideals of our educational policy in Bengal, we shall have done a valuable piece of work for the future and shall have deserved well of the Province.

This Conference was foreshadowed last March in my address to the Convocation of Calcutta University. It may not be out of place if, for a moment, I recall what I then said. I quote from my address on that occasion :

¹ Speech at the opening of the Educational Conference held in Government House, Calcutta, 23rd Nov., 1933.

"In the system of our higher education three authorities are concerned,—Government and the two Universities of Calcutta and Dacca. As matters stand, no one of these can hope, single-handed, to solve even those problems with which it is itself primarily concerned. Taking the problem as a whole, it is essentially a case for concerted action, for a pooling of experience and ideas. Matters like the overhauling of the examination system, the reformation of the school curriculum, the reorganisation of school and college education generally, the possibility of linking up University activities with practical experience in industry and commerce,—these are but a few of the problems for the successful solution of which friendly and intimate discussion between the three authorities interested seems to afford the best if not the only prospect."¹

I daresay all here would agree, however widely their views may differ on details, that the educational system of the Province leaves much to be desired. That at least is the assumption I make—but if any member of the Conference takes a contrary view, if he thinks that everything is exactly right—now is his chance to say so—and I am tempted to add, "or ever hold his peace." On that assumption, we have called this Conference in the hope that by the pooling of experience, and by bringing to bear the wide range of knowledge which collectively you command, we may be able to frame a policy which will, in the course of time, remedy such defects as we may discover in the existing system.

We therefore begin with an examination of certain features of the present system which it is suggested may be called in question, and then we proceed to consider certain concrete suggestions. All these points are put

¹ Vide page 279.



before you purely for the purpose of focussing discussion and not at all with any idea of anticipating the conclusions that may be arrived at in the course of the Conference.

Our desire is to take a strictly objective view of the situation, and we wish to be, above all things, practical. We are concerned here with policy but not with politics, and it is no part of our object merely to criticize what may have been done or left undone in the past. If we have to go back on the past it will be only in order that we may see more clearly ahead.

The first part of our task then is what may be described as a stock-taking, and after that we have to try to plan for the future. I hope you will all agree that the holding of this Conference is opportune, for even in so far as we may hold that our existing educational system has served its purpose well, it is a fact to which none of us can shut his eyes that the new India, which is developing so rapidly, is going to be very different from the India in which the system has grown up and whose needs it was designed to meet.

Some of you may be disposed to regard the agenda of the Conference as incomplete or one-sided. On that point I should like to say that it is not intended to be exhaustive. The somewhat vexed question of vocational training, for example, is referred to only incidentally; but it can of course be discussed as fully as may be desired. Again, there is no specific reference to women's education. As regards this it was in contemplation that if the present Conference succeeded in outlining some general scheme of education, the variations required for women's education could be subsequently considered,—if necessary, at a subsequent conference, at which the sex specially interested would be more fully represented. The inclusion

of primary education might also be suggested. But there, too, the omission was deliberate, for I do not think we can profitably go into that subject, except perhaps incidentally, on this occasion. It is in the main a self-contained problem.

It may perhaps be thought by some that all that is required in order to set things right in our educational policy is the provision of more money, and that conversely nothing substantial can be achieved by a Conference of this kind unless additional funds are at once forthcoming to implement its recommendations. But is that really so? If the ground-plan of our educational system is not sound, we run a risk of wasting our money by adding to the edifice. Our object in this Conference is to overhaul and test our plan. If our existing plan is not sound we must evolve something sounder. At the moment, of course, Government are not in a position to spend more money on secondary and University education. But we certainly do not contemplate being condemned to remain in our present condition of acute stringency for ever. When the time comes—be it early or late—when we have funds available for expansion, it will be an immense gain to have ready a well-thought-out and properly balanced plan, if possible a generally agreed one, to the development of which the available funds can be applied, and with reference to which all proposals for educational development may be tested. In the meantime it may prove far from disadvantageous that we should have to work out our plan in a period of scarcity when our wits should be sharpened to make each rupee do its full sixteen annas worth of work. I need hardly add that I hope we may also discover directions in which improvements can be effected that are not dependent on finance, and



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that need not, therefore, await the advent of better times.

Now you will have gathered from what I have said about the lines which our discussions are to follow, that there will be no scope at the beginning of our deliberations for speeches of a general character. The opportunity for that will be afforded to any who may desire it at a later stage, when we are in a position to sum up and formulate general conclusions. I need not detain you further by any remarks of my own. I can make no claim to expert knowledge of educational matters. What I want is advice and guidance, and you have been invited to come here as representing the best opinion in the Province on the matters that will come under discussion.



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I PUBLIC HEALTH¹

I HAVE looked forward with interest to my first visit to the town and district of Mymensingh. Not only is this district the most populous in India by more than a million and a half inhabitants, but also I find from the Census Report that it is actually more so than all save six of the forty nine sovereign states of the United States of America. It has more than twice the population of the whole North-Western Frontier Province and a larger population than the existing Division of Sindh.

As representatives of such a district you have naturally had many matters to place before me on my first visit, and I shall lose no time in coming to the specific points raised in your addresses. Let me take first the important question of public health. I am glad to see that the District Board, as the public health authority, is making a genuine effort to meet its responsibilities in this sphere. That Government are doing their share will be apparent from the fact that the grant to this district under the head "Medical" has, within the last three years—a period of acute financial stringency—been increased considerably.

You have drawn a somewhat unduly pessimistic picture of the state of your public health. I notice that

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Mymensingh, 17th July, 1933.

the same point was taken when my predecessor visited Mymensingh five years ago, and he referred you, in reply, to the deductions to be drawn from the steady and continuous growth of the population of the district. Since then we have had another census which shows an increase of just over six per cent in the population of the district in ten years, in spite of a considerable emigration to Assam. This figure compares not unfavourably with the general figure of 7·3 per cent for the Province as a whole, and the increase of the previous decade has been almost maintained. Indeed, I am advised that there has been no special unhealthiness apart from an outbreak of malignant malaria in certain parts, which the Director of Public Health investigated and reported to be due to excessive draining of the land for agricultural purposes without regard to its effect on the health of the locality.

As regards the specific requests that have been made, —for increased Government help in dealing with malaria and *kala-azar*—I can only say that the supply of free quinine to dispensaries has been increased this year. It is, of course, impossible for Government to undertake the entire cost of the supply of quinine to the Province. Generally speaking, Mymensingh is not one of the unhealthy districts of Bengal.

This question of public health is closely connected with that of the silting up of the Brahmaputra and other rivers. You have asked that Government should “concentrate their attention on the dredging of the rivers as early as possible.” The trouble here, I am afraid, is of very old standing, dating from the time—1778, I believe—when the main stream of the Brahmaputra broke away from the channel now known as “the old Brahmaputra”, and adopted the Jamuna as its main course. Since that



date, and more and more as time went on, the old course has served only as a high level spill channel for the main waters of the Brahmaputra, one result of which is that the water flows into the old channels only at the period when it is most heavily charged with silt. The effect of this has been that the bed of the old Brahmaputra has been raised in its upper reaches for a long distance from the point where it takes off from the Jamuna. Moreover, in the Jamuna itself the main current now flows on the western bank, and this tends to increase the silting up of the off-take of the old Brahmaputra. In the circumstances, excavation by dredging would not only be very expensive but would also be as ineffectual as a fight against nature in the long run is wont to be. All that I can say is that the possibility of improving the discharge of Jamuna water into the old river course by judicious bandalling in the head reach, after the flood season, is under investigation.

With regard to the opinion that the recently constructed railway bridge has been responsible for the gradual silting up of the river and for its tendency to encroach upon the town and undermine the riverside road, the view of the Irrigation Department is that the bridge provides an ample waterway. It may be due to the embankment that a certain amount of local flooding occurs, and the question whether any further waterway is necessary is being examined. The subsidence of the road in certain places is reported to be due to the inferior composition of the interior of the bank and to the accumulation of water on the town side, which finds its way into the bank and undermines it. The remedy would appear to be to reconstruct with more solid material, as has already been done successfully in certain portions, and to provide for proper drainage.

These improvements are the concern of the Municipality, who can count on the help and advice of the Irrigation Department as to the particular methods to be adopted.

I AM glad to gather from the figures quoted in the¹ interim report, that in spite of hard times the movement for the spread of a sound working knowledge of the elements of hygiene is making steady progress. Great difficulties beset the enthusiasts—official and non-official—in carrying the campaign into the small towns and villages,—difficulties of finance, apathy and prejudice. The rapidly growing success of the movement in Calcutta itself must be our main source of encouragement. In Calcutta the movement has definitely taken hold. It has the backing of the progressive elements among the people, and it has begun to fire the curiosity and interest of the public. It can be only a matter of time till it is communicated to the masses outside. This must be the message which we at headquarters can give to the pioneers who are working for the furtherance of the same good cause in the smaller towns and villages of Bengal, and this is what makes the success of our Health Welfare Week a matter of such importance.

It seems to have been an almost unqualified success. Though to my regret I was unable to be present at the opening ceremony, I have seen the programme and studied the various reports, and from these and other sources I am satisfied that the exhibition has this year surpassed all its predecessors in scope, volume and utility.

¹ Speech at the Final Meetings of the Central Committee of the Bengal Health Welfare Week and the Calcutta District Health Welfare Week, Calcutta, 6th March, 1933.



What strikes one first, from a perusal of the programme and the reports, is that here we have a shining example of all-round co-operation in a matter affecting the common good. Public bodies and private individuals, professional men and laymen, philanthropic societies and business houses,—men, women and even children have all co-operated to make this exhibition a success. There must be something of pretty general importance in the cause which commands the ready help of such a diversity of bodies too innumerable to mention here.

Reference has been made to the wide fields yet to be traversed before we could feel that all was being done that is humanly possible for the prevention of disease and the creation of a strong and healthy people. I remember well the shock experienced by the general public—if not by medico-social workers—in Great Britain as a result of the disclosures about our national health which followed from the medical examination of millions of men who volunteered or were called up for military service. I do not know that the results were as bad as the alarmists said, or that we were shown to be physically any more a "C 3" nation (as the saying went) than other western countries. But I do remember that enough was shown to demonstrate the necessity for health welfare work on the most extensive lines. And if that is so in England, are we not justified in assuming that there is greater scope for this work in India? For, if the people here are spared, by reason of their simpler life, some of the evils from which we suffer in the more artificial surroundings of the highly industrialized West, there can be no doubt that present day India has her own special problems of health and hygiene. Take, for example, the ravages of malaria and cholera, or the contraction

and spread of tuberculosis which the seclusion of women must have in a congested city like Calcutta. I am afraid that as yet we are only touching the fringes of a problem that must long outlive our day. The problem, however, has to be faced, and all great movements must have a beginning. Our beginning has been made already,—and well made. What we are called upon to do is to press on, to see that impetus is gathered rather than lost, and that the effect is cumulative.

This is what we have done and are doing. This year's Exhibition marks an advance on its predecessors, just as they in turn surpassed those which had gone before. Whether you look at it from the point of view of the fare we had to offer—fare, widened in scope and increased in volume—or from the point of view of the numbers who came to partake of that fare, the figures of previous years have been transcended. A remarkable edifice has already been erected on the modest foundations of the Baby Week Exhibition of 1925, which was the genesis of the present movement in Bengal. This year's exhibition covers human life and activity at every stage, and to anyone looking through the programme of exhibits it would be a task of some difficulty to find a subject in the field of hygiene, of interest to Bengal, which was not dealt with at the Exhibition and dealt with simply, practically and effectively.

LET me vary the stereotyped order of proceedings by¹ beginning with a little story. Recently, on board ship, where (except probably on the new hectic pleasure

¹ Speech at the Final Meeting of the Health Welfare Week Committees, Calcutta, 29th March, 1935.



cruises) men and women escape for a time from the fevered rush of modern existence and are able to reflect, a friend of mine was sitting with half-a-dozen others on deck after dinner discussing various topics in the contented way that one does on those rare and pleasant occasions. The conversation turned to the things that were most desirable in life. It started by one man asking the company what three gifts they would choose, and the order in which they would choose them, if a fairy godmother were to appear and offer so to bless them.

The upshot of the conversation was that the three best gifts to choose would be, *first*, happiness; *second*, health; and *third*, wisdom.

As you will readily guess, there was a little argument as to the relative positions of health and happiness, and happiness won the day on the ground that it was better, both for one's self and for others, to be happy though ailing than to be healthy and at the same time miserable.

Whether the members of the Committee who are present to-night will agree to this I do not know, but at any rate the very existence of the Committee makes it clear that they will agree that among the most precious gifts man can possess is health. That the public of Bengal, and of Calcutta in particular, is becoming of the same mind is increasingly evident year after year from the reports presented to this meeting. This year the reports cover the ground so fully, and I have in the last two years at these meetings spoken so freely of my general views and appreciation of the work, that there remains little for me to say.

This Health Welfare Week is organized under the auspices of the Bengal Provincial Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society, and in view of the fact that most



people think of this Society as being concerned only with the incidents of war, I make no apology for covering some of the same ground that I traversed about ten days ago at the annual meeting of the St. John Ambulance Association and the Red Cross Society in order to make it clear why the Red Cross Society should be doing this work. It may seem a far cry from Bengal Health Week to the Treaty of Versailles, but that Treaty is the reason why the Red Cross Society undertakes the work.

The frightful condition of the sick and wounded in war was brought prominently to public notice by the work of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War in the 1850's, with the result that an International Conference was held at Geneva, and this produced a Convention in 1864 which, without any substantial modification, has since been acceded to by every civilized nation providing for the setting up of organisations in peace time which would be ready in time of war to minister to the sick and wounded.

In England it needed the stimulus of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to translate the terms of this convention into realities. The British Red Cross dates from that year, and from then till the end of the Great War it functioned continuously, purely as a War auxiliary, and rendered service in almost every war that took place irrespective of who the belligerents were.

In India it was the stimulus of the Great War which led to the formation of a Red Cross Society as a branch of the British Society, and from 1914 onwards this functioned as an adjunct to the St. John Ambulance Association until in 1920 by Acts of the Central and Local Legislatures the Indian Red Cross Society and its Bengal Branch were formed.

In the meantime, the scope of Red Cross Societies had



been enormously widened by the Treaty of Versailles. Part of that Treaty was the Covenant of the League of Nations, one article of which provided that Red Cross Societies should extend their activities so as to embrace the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world.

The survey of the work in the districts, given by the Bengal Health Welfare Secretary, shows clearly that there is fruitful soil for the setting up of permanent Health Welfare Centres. I have no doubt in my mind that within a measurable distance of time we shall find these established in ever-increasing numbers. The result of their establishment will be to improve enormously the sanitary condition of villages and, consequent on that, the general level of health of the rural population. I need hardly say that the full co-operation of the Public Health Department of Government can be counted on in this matter.

It was very encouraging to hear from Lady Birkmyre that not only has there been a big increase in subscriptions and donations, but that even though an entrance fee was imposed this year for the Calcutta Health Exhibition, the attendance was as good as ever. There could be no surer indication that a real want is being supplied, for it is one thing to go to see a free show and an entirely different one to pay to see it, particularly when it is serious and educative and not merely an entertainment.

Here again, however, the future is chalked out in clear lines, pointing unmistakably to the establishment of a series of permanent Health Depots throughout the city; but, if only to prevent overlapping, this must be done in co-ordination and co-operation with the Calcutta Corporation, which has already established a Health

Association in each Ward. The ideal we must set ourselves is to supplement the annual Health Week in Calcutta and Bengal by a sustained health effort running through the fifty-two weeks of the year. A beginning towards the realisation of this ideal was made in 1934 with the establishment of the Child Welfare Centre of which Dr. Jean Orkney has told us, and from her account it would seem to be a very good beginning indeed. I shall watch with interest and confidence for the fulfilment of the high hope expressed by her that this centre will change the Ward in which it is situated from the unhealthiest to the healthiest in Calcutta.

Colonel Stewart's¹ interesting remarks point to yet another line of progress and that is the teaching in all schools and colleges, as a part of the normal curriculum, of the principles of hygiene, sanitation and health. The possibilities of action in this direction are already being considered by my advisers.

It is regrettable that for the last eighteen months lack of funds has made it necessary to close the Bengal Training School for Health Welfare Workers. The opening of Health Welfare Centres is contingent on the re-opening of this School and so, for the present, we are brought up short by that common disease which afflicts individuals and associations of individuals alike—imppecuniosity. In my opinion what is needed in all philanthropic bodies is a finance committee which will deal exclusively with the provision and allocation of funds, and will set itself the task of raising them.

I will detain you no longer except to assure you of my deep interest in your activities—an interest which springs

¹ Lt. Col. A. D. Stewart, C.I.E., M.B., F.R.C.S.E., D.P.H. & D.T.M. & H., I.M.S., late Director of the All India Institute of Hygiene, Calcutta. Now Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.



from my conviction that you are tackling one of the basic problems confronting Bengal, and one which must be resolved if the Province is to progress and not decline, and I promise you any support and help I can give you.

THE two organisations which hold their combined¹ annual meeting to-night—the Bengal Health Welfare Week Central Committee and the Calcutta Health Week Committee—are inspired by similar objects and work with a similar plan of campaign. The object is one of the few forms of warfare that can really be called noble—the war against disease and the ignorance that breeds disease. The plan of campaign is a sound one. I may compare the annual exhibitions to a frontal attack on the powers of darkness. But such an attack needs to be followed by the establishment of permanent clinics by which the ground won may be consolidated, and the success achieved exploited in detail.

Here, however, let us confess that we are face to face with an obstacle to our progress. Our ultimate aim is the establishment of clinics, but this demands an adequate supply of suitable and properly trained health welfare workers. So long as the school for health workers remains closed, our advance is held up at the point where it ought to begin to achieve substantial results. It seems to me that it is time to take a look at our organisation and see whether it is sufficiently effective to secure our purpose. In speaking on this subject, I recognize that there are other committees concerned

¹ Speech at the Final Meetings of the Calcutta Health Week and the Bengal Health Welfare Week Committees, Calcutta, 17th March, 1936.

who are not represented here. From that point of view it might be more appropriate to reserve my remarks till another suitable occasion. At the same time the Committees present are very definitely concerned, since the establishment of clinics is the ultimate aim of the work they are doing; anything that may make that work easier is relevant to our purpose. There are four separate organisations interested in this work, of which two only are officially present. There is the Bengal Committee which organizes Health Exhibitions in Bengal, and the Calcutta Committee which arranges the Calcutta Exhibition. For the fulfilment of the ultimate purpose of their work, both of them depend on the Training School. Lastly, there is the District Clinic Section which deals with mofussil clinics already established, but has no active central committee of its own. Neither the Training School nor the District Clinic Section is officially represented here to-night, nor is there any regular and continuous co-ordination of effort between them and the other two Committees.

In the case of Bengal, you have three echelons of your Army—the Health Week, the Training School and the District Clinics. I cannot help feeling that there might be advantages in a greater unity of command and organisation between these three divisions of a force that has a common objective. I do not know what difficulties there may be in such a course, but I would commend for your consideration the possibility of centralizing under the Committee the three phases of this work, namely the holding of Health Exhibitions in the districts, the provision of an adequate supply of trained welfare workers, and the subsequent supervision and assistance by grants-in-aid of district centres that may be



established. Such a central body would need a finance sub-committee to raise funds, control expenditure, and give impetus and direction to the work as a whole.

Where Calcutta would come in this picture is a matter that I must leave for your consideration. In so far as Calcutta is one local area within the province, its position might be comparable to that of a district in which one or more clinics have been established. Calcutta also has no less an interest than the mofussil in the reopening and successful working of the training school. From this point of view, it might seem that Calcutta, with its own committee, could fall into the picture as a district in the same way as might a mofussil district with its own clinic and its own committee. Calcutta has its own special problems, and works on a large scale. It requires in consequence to make its special appeals for funds. If the city should decide that the interests of the work are best served by its remaining outside any general scheme, I do not suggest that it should sacrifice itself merely for the sake of uniformity of organisation. If, on the other hand, it is felt that the need for centralisation of efforts and pooling of energy is the deciding factor, then perhaps some arrangement might be made by which Calcutta came into the general framework of the organisation without losing its importance as the largest and at present the most active local area. These are matters which I will not ask you to discuss now. I put them before you merely in the form of suggestions that may be worth thinking about and that might possibly bear fruit. What I do feel is that we should never lose sight of our ultimate aim, and that our organisation should be subordinated to attaining it.

I imagine that every right-thinking man and woman

is convinced of his or her share in the obligation to prevent, no less than to relieve, needless suffering and disease. But absorbed as we are with our own occupations, this tends to remain an intellectual rather than a moral conviction except when one gets a toothache oneself. If we want to make faster progress we must intensify the effort to bring home to those who can help, the reality of the suffering that can be prevented. This is not the place to enter into details of the work that welfare workers have to do, but let me say that I do appreciate some of the realities of the campaign in which you are engaged. I feel that if its magnitude can be brought home to those in a position to help, you will not fail to win the further support that you need. The line of attack through Infant-Welfare clinics is one that strikes at the very heart of the trouble, and is also one that should make an appeal to the most deep-seated instincts of humanity—the instinct of reverence for the mother and the child. It is an appeal strong enough to break down barriers of caste and creed, and the work that is to be done penetrates into the inner-most recesses of the villages, carrying with it a new outlook on life and a new hope for the future.



II

MEDICAL RELIEF¹

INGRAINED in us all there is a fondness for celebrating anniversaries. This has been fostered from our earliest days by the pleasant custom of receiving and giving presents, particularly on birthdays. As time rolls relentlessly on, we are apt to make less and less fuss about our own birthdays. Indeed it is whispered that at a certain, or perhaps I should say at an uncertain age some people even go backwards, or at any rate do not admit to being any older. Our inherited instinct finds an outlet on occasions such as this when we can take satisfaction in joyfully commemorating not a mere anniversary but far more impressive and noble thing—a centenary.

The journey through life of an Institution such as the Medical College and its attendant Hospitals is punctuated, not by milestones but by foundation stones. I count it a piece of great good fortune that during my term of office this centenary should occur, and that to commemorate it public-spirited men should have raised funds from the charitable section of the public in order to build a much-needed addition to the premises of the Hospital. I am thus afforded the opportunity of laying

¹ Speech at the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Casualty Ward, Medical College Hospital, Calcutta, on the occasion of the Medical College Centenary, 28th January, 1935.

an important and memorable stone, and it is with great satisfaction that I see convincing evidence that this veteran institution is still going strong—indeed stronger than ever—as it takes the hundredth milestone in its stride. If any proof were needed that it is sound in wind and limb, and that its heart still beats steadily and vigorously, it is forthcoming in the various remarks indicating the desire for further activities and yet more departments.

We all listened with great interest to the story of the continuous development of the College and of the way in which it has not only kept abreast of modern medical knowledge and practice through the devotion of its teachers and the enthusiasm of its students, but has itself made valuable contributions to the sum of medical knowledge by means of the research work it has carried out. The historical review of the College is so thorough that little is left for me to say except of a general nature. If the College is to be of the maximum service to Bengal, it must continue to receive financial support from those who can afford to give it. Indeed, had more adequate support been forthcoming in the past, the College could have reached an even higher level of efficiency at the close of its first century of life than it has attained.

There are only two Medical Colleges in Bengal affiliated to the University, this College and the Carmichael College at Belgachia. It therefore follows that every medical graduate trained in Bengal must pass through one or other of them. It is a matter of vital interest to the province as a whole that the training which these medical men receive shall be the best possible, and that there shall be no gaps in their medical knowledge because of lack of facilities for teaching



and demonstrating certain subjects. It is not merely a question, though that in itself would be sufficiently important, of one of the principal hospitals in the capital city of the province lacking equipment to treat disease in the best possible manner.

Government is doing what it can, but it is not a matter which should be left to them alone. Here, as in other countries, it is something which, in the fullest sense of the word, vitally affects the well-being of the nation and so demands the earnest and sustained efforts of the community as a whole.

In comparison with the sums contributed by the generous public, the amount Government has agreed to allot for the recurring costs of the Casualty Ward may, at Rs. 25,000 per annum, seem small, but it must be remembered that if this sum were capitalized to-day it would represent a contribution of Rs. 6,70,000. In view of this I do not think it can be said that the public are being asked to undertake an unfair share of the burden of providing the province with medical men whose training can compare favourably with that of medical men in England or other countries practising the same systems of medicine and surgery. In a province containing over fifty million people there are but two Medical Colleges in which an adequate general training can be given. It should be the care and pride of Bengal to see to it that they are models of what such colleges should be. If this is implemented, the benefits which will flow back to the people will be enormous and will be to their lasting advantage.

I thank the Committee for the honour they have done me in asking me to lay the foundation stone of the new Casualty Ward and in desiring to name it "The Anderson Centenary Ward."

I AM very pleased indeed to be present here to open¹ the Sir John Anderson Casualty Block, the foundation stone of which I laid a little over two years ago. The external view of the building that has now risen on that foundation is impressive and gives rise to high expectations of what we shall find within. I feel sure that when we come to penetrate into the various wards themselves, and see the work from the inside, we shall not be disappointed.

The psychological effect of the outward appearance of a hospital must be of great importance to the doctor in his task. Which of us does not face the dentist with renewed confidence when he has found a waiting room clean and tidy, devoid of apprehensive visitors and provided with illustrated papers of even moderate modernity? That cheerful aspect of a temple of healing is a great reinforcement to the skill and devotion of its high priests. Hitherto, this hospital has not been able to boast of either the outward or the inward appearance of its casualty accommodation. I have no doubt that the work it did was of the highest standard, but much of that work was done under conditions depressing to doctors and patients alike.

Moreover, the importance of proper surroundings and adequate facilities cannot be over-emphasized from the point of view of a teaching institution. The student who labours under difficulties of seeing, hearing and recording his observations, starts with a heavy handicap. It is upon those who qualify from our teaching hospitals that we must rely to set the standard of equipment, efficiency and supervision elsewhere. It is of the greatest importance to the province that the teaching hospitals should

¹ Speech at the opening of the "Sir John Anderson Casualty Block", Calcutta Medical College, 20th March, 1937.



set an example in these respects to those who study there at an impressionable age.

In all these respects the old casualty accommodation was seriously defective. But now, by means of the generous response to the centenary appeal, a great change has been effected. Nobody would go so far as to want to be a casualty merely for the sake of sampling the accommodation which has now been provided. But those unfortunate people who are brought here in sudden and urgent need of help, will find bright and pleasant surroundings in which to be treated and to recuperate, and students working in this block will carry away with them a lasting impression of what a modern hospital should be.

The appeal issued in 1934 has been thus far successful, and I trust that in due course its other objects may also be fulfilled. As originally made, it covered a wide range of objects; but realizing the importance of a strictly practical programme, those responsible concentrated on three main purposes—the establishment of the casualty buildings, the provision of radium—that essential element in the modern treatment of cancer, and the centralisation and fusion of outpatients departments. Of these purposes two have been fulfilled and the last one yet remains. The appeal specified the sum of rupees five lakhs, and up to date the collections amount to about rupees three and half lakhs which, though falling short of expectations, furnishes proof of the large-hearted generosity of the public of Bengal.

It was hoped that the Committee would be able to collect enough money to complete the west wing and to effect the centralisation of the outpatients departments. If expectations as regards the outpatients departments and the west wing have not come up to the mark, it

is at any rate very satisfactory to know that the purchase of radium has been made possible, in the meantime, by the Silver Jubilee Fund. I understand that arrangements are now being made to obtain the supply of radium by means of the forty thousand rupees contributed by the Fund, and that the Hospital will soon be in a position to administer modern radium therapy in malignant diseases.

As regards the other objects, one can only hope that other persons of means and goodwill, impressed by the excellent use that has been made of the amount so far raised, will come forward with the remaining sixty or seventy thousand rupees and enable the whole programme of the centenary appeal to be carried through.

It is now about fifty years ago that the Countess of¹ Dufferin, after whom this institution is named, expressed the hope that the good work then started might prosper and that the Hospital might become the centre of medical relief to the women of Bengal. She added the further hope that much might be done here in the way of training nurses, so that it might be a means of promoting all the objects of the National Association for supplying medical aid to women. To-day, as we set our hands to this new building, we feel how great was the need for the inauguration of the Dufferin Fund² and how truly it has served the objects with which it was established. We are reminded, however, that though the aims of a fund of this kind endure for ever, the building

¹ Speech at the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Dufferin Hospital, 25th March, 1937.

² On December 5, 1888, the Foundation Stone of the first hospital to be built by the Bengal branch of the Lady Dufferin Fund was laid by the Countess of Dufferin.



and the material implements through which it works are transitory and frequently in need of extension or even complete reconstruction. So rapid is the advance of hospital technique and practice, and so heavy the expanding demands upon hospital accommodation, that those who are responsible, are periodically faced with the necessity of raising from public charity large sums of money. The Dufferin Fund has already to its credit the building of two hospitals, and this is the third in the short space of fifty years. Fortunately, thanks to the foresight of past committees who have left enough space here for the purpose, it will be possible to complete the erection and occupation of the new building before demolishing the old.

In the design of the building the skill of the architects has been reinforced by the practical experience of those whose business it will be to carry on the day to day management of the hospital. Our new hospital is to be a building of four storeys with 200 beds. There will be an enlarged outpatients department with medical, surgical and gynæcological wards. The two maternity wards, for clean and septic cases respectively, will be placed on different floors so that the two classes of patients may be kept absolutely apart.

The single small operating theatre will be replaced by two blocks in which, again, the clean and septic cases will be kept apart. Many rooms will be provided for paying patients; such accommodation, which gives the patient privacy and enables her to have a relative with her, is always much appreciated. Larger and more expensive suites for families are also being provided. It has fortunately been found possible to include a small children's ward. In the present hospital a piece of the verandah walled in, small and cramped, is the only

pathological laboratory. This essential feature of a modern hospital is included in the new building, and is provided with ample accommodation. The duty rooms for nurses, ward kitchens, store-rooms, and sanitary annexes have been planned for easy working. The nurses will be able to do all the work unaided, and under good and easy conditions.

The enterprise which we begin to-day is another of the important results of the success attained in Bengal by the organisers of the Silver Jubilee Fund, together with the handsome co-operation of the District Boards. From the provincial Silver Jubilee Fund a sum of Rs. 2,20,000 was allotted to the Dufferin Building Fund and a further lakh was received from the Central Fund at Delhi. About a year ago, in response to certain representations, I received a characteristic telegram from Her Excellency Lady Willingdon sending me personal greetings and the welcome intimation that a further Rs. 75,000 had been passed for the Dufferin Fund. I am glad to take this opportunity to-day of acknowledging Lady Willingdon's personal interest in this project, and expressing on behalf of you all our gratitude for the help that we have received. I am confident that the donors of the Silver Jubilee Fund will feel that their gifts are being applied to a noble and worthy purpose, and that when the building comes to completion, they will find in it yet another fitting memorial to the Jubilee of our late King-Emperor George V, of blessed memory, in the noble cause of the relief of pain and suffering.

It may sound ambitious, but I hope not ungracious, if when inaugurating the project which we now have in hand, I refer to what yet remains to be done in order to completely fulfil our present obligations and derive the

full value from the work that is being undertaken. Even if the matter were considered only by itself, we have an obligation to the nurses who work in this hospital—an obligation to see that during their hours of rest they can live under conditions of reasonable privacy and comfort, the absence of which puts a totally unfair strain upon nurses who, while on duty, are subject to the most exacting demands upon their energy, skill and patience. The conditions under which the nurses at present live are not such as are in fairness their due. They are crowded into a hostel intended to house only three quarters of the actual number. It is true that when the new hospital is built, space will be found to relieve the overcrowding. But this can only be done by encroaching upon what would be free for patients. Moreover, a hospital such as this provides an unrivalled opportunity for the expert training in proper surroundings, of a large number of Indian nurses intended for hospitals in all parts of the province. But so long as the accommodation for nurses is restricted, we shall be failing to take due advantage of the opportunities here presented.

There is a scheme under consideration by the hospital authorities for the establishment of a separate building to form a nurses' hostel and school. It is intended to arrange for altogether a hundred nurses and to run a first class training school for Indian nurses. Whether or not the whole scheme finally materializes, however, will depend on the generosity of the public of Bengal. For myself I should have a feeling of great regret if I knew that the wealth of medical knowledge, which will be available from day to day in this hospital, was not to be exploited to the full in the teaching and training of either students or nurses who would later use their knowledge

and experience for the benefit of the province as a whole¹.

EVERY important country has in recent years become² alive to the necessity for an institution of this nature, and for reasons which have been lucidly explained by Colonel Stewart, India has now wisely followed suit.

This fine building in which we are gathered, the site on which it stands, and its complete equipment—much of which has yet to be installed—represent a munificent gift to India from the Rockefeller Institution—the total value of which amounts to approximately 18 lakhs of rupees. The world-wide benefactions of the Rockefeller Foundation are certainly without any parallel, not merely because of their unrivalled generosity, but also because of the extraordinary care and forethought which is taken to ensure that the best possible use is made of the huge sums which are distributed every year. The members of the foundation insist on making a thorough preliminary survey of every field of activity in which their help is needed, and, acting on this principle, they sent to India one of their highly skilled experts, to make an exhaustive and sympathetic study of medical education in this country. As the result of his report, the Foundation made their generous offer of this All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health. What they stipulated in return was that the Institute should serve the whole of India, that the Government of India should undertake

¹ Built at a cost of over Rs. 6,00,000, the new buildings of the hospital were opened by Her Excellency Lady Reid, on the 24th March, 1939.

² Speech at the opening of the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, 30th December, 1932.



the responsibility for the adequate maintenance of Public Health teaching to be organized in six sections in co-operation with the School of Tropical Medicine, and that the scientific control of the Institute should be entrusted to a Governing Body constituted in such a way as to ensure single-minded devotion to scientific endeavour by a staff chosen solely with regard to its competence. These conditions, far from being irksome restrictions upon the activities of the Institute, are useful safeguards for securing its permanent value to the people of India. The Government of India gratefully accepted the gift and entered into an undertaking to comply with the conditions laid down by the foundation. It is most unfortunate that owing to the financial situation they have had to start the Institute with four sections only instead of six.

It may be appropriate that I should here say a few words about the School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, which forms the historical background of the new Institute as well as an integral part of the whole scheme. This School stands as a monument to the energy of Sir Leonard Rogers¹, whose great achievements in combating tropical diseases are known throughout the world. It was expected that his School would provide ample accommodation for the requirements of the teaching and research staff for many years, but the rapid growth of their activities soon showed its Director that a separate Institute of Hygiene was essential for the completion of the scheme. I am confident that history will now repeat itself, and I feel that there could be no happier augury for the future of the Institute than the great success achieved by its forerunner—the School of Tropical Medicine. It is, indeed, gratifying to my

¹ Formerly Pathologist to the Government of Bengal.

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Government to find that their action in assuming responsibility for the School has paved the way for the establishment of this organisation, which will supply the needs not merely of Bengal but of the whole of India.

Colonel Stewart has happily stressed the point that the foundation of the Institute coincides with the opening of a new era in the history of India. India is now about to enter the gateway to further constitutional advance. Great opportunities entail great responsibilities not lightly to be discharged, and functions which will influence profoundly the future welfare of the country and its people. But I am confident that the experience gained since the introduction of the Reforms Act and the establishment of Local Self-Government has prepared administrators and legislators for the assumption of the onerous duties that lie ahead of them. Let them remember that good government and the health and welfare of the people march hand in hand. It is not too much to say that the future of this Institute will depend equally upon the wisdom and vision of the administrators of the country and upon the willing co-operation of the people.



III

TWO CAMPAIGNS¹

I HAVE looked forward with pleasant anticipation to my visit to a district in which the leaders and the masses alike have in the main shown an appreciation of the need for concerted effort for the common good. I believe that collaboration among yourselves and co-operation with local and provincial authorities are not only productive of beneficial results for all concerned, but are quite compatible with the maintenance of individual and corporate self-respect. No meek subservience is involved,—no hesitation to criticize where criticism is called for. With better judgment than some of your neighbours, you have shown that you believe in facing facts, realizing that the dissipation of energy which follows upon conflict between the Government by law established and the people who need the help which that Government alone can give, must inevitably result in general disillusionment and distress.

A subject of paramount importance to the people is the prevalence in an acute form of a disease like malaria in an area which less than a century ago enjoyed the reputation of a health resort. Leaving aside the grant which is made annually by Government for anti-mosquito measures, I wish to commend to your

¹ Reply to the Addresses presented at Burdwan, 30th January, 1933.

notice two important schemes with a view to securing your active co-operation when the time comes. Both of them are in an experimental state at the moment, and going to be undertaken this year.

The first of these is a survey of levels over a wide area—approximately 1,550 square miles—undertaken to supply a basis for calculations designed to show how far schemes for flood flushing in this area are likely to be efficacious and financially possible. Whether or not any large scheme of flood flushing can be taken up, this survey is likely to be of great use to the authorities concerned in deciding on the practicability of smaller schemes at little or no cost within the area surveyed. It is as yet, of course, absolutely impossible to say whether this survey will lead to the introduction of flushing measures on a large scale. But one point I wish to make quite clear at the outset. Even if the configuration of the ground should render some such scheme feasible and the cost does not prove prohibitive, there will still be another element absolutely essential to success, namely, the co-operation of the people in the area affected. With careful organisation it ought to be possible, in any such scheme, to time the flushing operations so as to interfere very little with the rotation of crops and the processes of agriculture. But the agriculturist is notoriously conservative, and there will be great need for voluntary and widespread propaganda directed towards bringing home to the cultivators the benefit, not only to their health but to their lands, likely to result from flushing with the silt-laden water of the rivers. This is the kind of work in which Anti-Malaria Co-operative Societies can play a most useful part, and the change of attitude among the cultivators experienced by those who recently conducted



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the experiment of flushing with silt water in certain areas of Midnapore illustrates what local enthusiasm can achieve, and encourages the hope that if the people of Burdwan also are given the opportunity, they will not allow themselves to be surpassed by the people of another district in a matter so closely affecting their own welfare.

The other experiment to which I wish to refer marks a complete departure from the methods we have hitherto employed in Bengal. In the past we have attacked the malaria problem mainly from two angles. We have treated with quinine and cinchona and other febrifuges the people who were actually suffering from malaria—and the treatment has undoubtedly justified itself by reducing both the amount of sickness and the death rate. This, however, was a measure aimed at cure rather than prevention. On the preventive side, remembering that malaria is a mosquito-borne disease, we have attacked the mosquito itself by methods such as flushing, spraying and the cultivation of larvicidal fish,—methods all effective if persisted in, but in the long run costly and calling for continuous and co-ordinated effort.

The method we now propose to put to the test aims primarily not at exterminating the mosquito,—the carrier of the malaria parasite,—but at preventing the mosquito becoming infected. The method depends on the fact that the mosquito is itself only liable to infection at certain periods of the year. If during those periods we can ensure that the human beings from whom the mosquito collects the malaria parasites shall themselves be non-infective, we shall prevent the spread of malaria without having to complete the immense task of destroying the mosquito. It has been discovered that while the administration of quinine reduces and may

apparently eliminate the traces of malaria in a human being, that same human being may continue to be infective to an anopheles mosquito and so be an unsuspected source of danger to others whom that mosquito may attack. A drug has now become available called Plasmochin, which it is claimed will, if taken with quinine for three days, render the patient non-infective to mosquitoes. The present proposal is to administer this drug with quinine on a large scale in a selected area at a time of the year immediately prior to the period when the mosquito becomes liable to infection. If these claims are justified, it is obvious that provided the area treated is large enough and the administration of the drug within that area is universal, it should be possible to prevent the further communication of malaria. The only risk then would be the importation of malaria from outside. This again could be minimized by the gradual extension of the area in which all human beings were rendered non-infective by means of the Plasmochin treatment.

From what I have said, it will be clear that in this experiment, even more than in schemes of flushing or spraying, the co-operation of everyone is essential to the success of the scheme. All that will be required of the people will be that whether they think they have malaria or not, they shall, on three successive days during the forthcoming hot weather period, take a prescribed dose of quinine and Plasmochin. We shall open treatment centres and depute the field staff necessary for the distribution of the drug, but I cannot too strongly emphasize that the whole value of the scheme, both as an experiment and as a curative measure, depends upon the completeness of its execution throughout the area to which it is applied. A single man, woman or child not taking the dose prescribed may



remain infective and be the cause of his village becoming a focus for infection which will neutralize the scheme over a wide and ever-spreading area. It is not without reason that the district of Burdwan, with its good record of public health work, has been chosen as the ground for this experiment. I feel confident that the trust which the Hon'ble Minister is placing in his countrymen in this district will be amply justified, and that we shall obtain from the co-operation of the people in a matter so much in their own interest, all the *data* from which to judge an experiment fraught with tremendous possibilities for the welfare of the Province as a whole.

LET me say at once that the objects of the Association¹ and the methods it has adopted have my entire sympathy and support. It so happens that, as Secretary of the newly formed National Insurance Commission, which some of you may remember was set up in the United Kingdom to administer the provisions of the National Insurance Act of 1911, I was brought closely into touch with the early development of the campaign against Tuberculosis in Great Britain. I know something of the work that has been done in that line at home and of the encouraging results that have attended it, and I am the more interested in seeing work proceeding, though on somewhat different lines, out here where, as figures available clearly show, the need is not less urgent. For the growing realisation of the dimensions and urgency of the problem in Bengal and particularly in the congested areas

¹ Speech at the Annual Meeting of the Tuberculosis Association, Calcutta, 10th March, 1933.



in and around Calcutta, this Association is largely responsible, and appreciation of the danger is the first step in the campaign against it, for tuberculosis is, to a very great extent, a preventable disease. From this it follows,—and all experience goes to bear this out—that education is the best means of combating the spread of the disease. It can be both preventive and curative, and this is essentially a case where prevention is better than cure. It is after all mainly a matter of personal hygiene,—though, of course, the standard of life and housing conditions play a most important part. Even so, people of poor means and living in unhealthy quarters can be taught how to make the best of their conditions and how to avoid spreading and catching infection. This, and early diagnosis coupled with home treatment of cases in the incipient stages, are the main features of the preventive side. Cure in individual cases must always remain more or less a personal matter. In India, at all events, we are not yet in a position to undertake in State institutions the treatment of all who are suffering from this disease. But even here education as to the right way to live, if coupled with early diagnosis, will work wonders with those in whom the disease is not yet deeply rooted. It will help them to regain health for themselves and it will teach them how to avoid infecting those who are in daily contact with them—their friends, relatives and neighbours. It is on these lines that the Association is working, and I am sure these are the right lines and the lines on which the maximum result will be attained within your present resources.

Coming to the year under review, I must say that the Association has hitherto worked entirely without State aid. I find it as surprising as it is satisfactory that the organisation has developed to the extent it has in the



short period (three years only) that has elapsed since its inception. To take what may rightly be regarded as the principal indices of the scale of the preventive work accomplished—examinations carried out at the dispensaries and homes visited by the Association's trained visitors—I find that whereas in the first full year of existence about 2,600 houses were visited and just over 2,000 cases were examined in the Association's two dispensaries, in 1932 nearly 13,000 houses were visited (an increase of nearly 400 per cent.) and more than 25,000 examinations were made in the Association's dispensaries—an increase of twelvefold. These figures mark the development in the course of three years. The development in the year 1932 is best illustrated by the fact that at the beginning of the year the work of the Association was organized from three dispensaries only; by the end of the year the Society had six dispensaries and another dispensary so nearly ready that it was possible to open it for work on the second day of the current year. The dispensary is the unit of organisation, the focus of effective preventive work. It is in the dispensary that the diagnosis of suspected cases is carried out and accurate statistics are kept, and it is from there that the trained visitors radiate, following up in their homes the cases examined in the dispensary and spreading knowledge of the hygiene of tuberculosis prevention in the places where the disease is rife. The opening of a new dispensary means a new point of attack on the disease.

The Association—and indeed the public generally—owe a deep debt of gratitude to all who have contributed towards this successful year's work. Much of the work is done entirely without remuneration, and our thanks are due particularly to the many medical men who have ungrudgingly given their services in many ways. Taking

it all round, 1932 is a year upon which the Association can look with pride.

And what of 1933 ? The problem is still gigantic. It was computed by a competent authority that over 100,000 people died of tuberculosis in this Province during the year 1928, and that at a conservative estimate another million were already suffering from the disease. When you think of the potentiality for evil even one sufferer may possess, however unwillingly or unwittingly, you can begin to realize why it is necessary for the people of Bengal to kill this scourge before it kills the people. Two years ago someone said that there ought to be at least eight clinics in Calcutta alone. For that the Association needed grants from the Corporation of Calcutta and from the Department of Local Self-Government. Last year my predecessor told you that the need for such an organisation was no longer open to doubt, and the mere recognition of that need was a great step towards the eradication of the menace which it was fighting. Recognition has now come in concrete form. The grant will, I trust, be the means of enabling the Association to undertake a great extension of its activities in the mofussil. You are engaged upon a very necessary and a very promising task. Much remains to be done, but I can assure you that in the work which lies ahead, you can count upon my interest and my support.

THERE are many signs that at least among the more¹ educated classes the public conscience is beginning to awake on the subject of tuberculosis, and I have little

¹ Speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Tuberculosis Association of Bengal, Calcutta, 23rd March, 1937.



doubt that the services of this body during the last eight years have done a great deal towards bringing about this result. The Association by itself could not, even if it tried, deal with this problem. That is a responsibility that must rest on many shoulders; but your function is to bring home to others the appreciation of that responsibility and to show by technical advice and practical demonstration how it may effectively be discharged.

Your report gives a concise and convincing account of the steps that you have been able to take towards those ends. The dispensaries in existence a year ago consisted of five in Calcutta, one in Howrah and one in Dacca. Since then a dispensary has been opened at Kalimpong with your co-operation, and Darjeeling, where I understand an extension of the amenities for in-patients is very shortly to take place, has called in your expert assistance. Other districts, where X-ray arrangements exist to facilitate diagnosis, have been approached and I hope that from some at any rate, your advances will meet with an early response.

Yet the problem calls for wider spreading of knowledge, earlier diagnosis and immensely greater facilities for expert treatment at local centres. It is not merely a question of one sanatorium here or there. An institution of that kind is an obvious and imperative necessity, if only for the purpose of providing facilities both for research and for training doctors and workers, without which an adequate dissemination of expert knowledge is impossible. Taking the province as a whole, a single sanatorium can deal with only an infinitesimal portion of the affected population. In deciding to continue and intensify your propaganda and demonstration work with a view to stimulating the activities of the

State and local authorities, you are, therefore, working on the right line of advance.

Propaganda, however, unsupported by practical demonstration, will not convince in the long run. It was a Malaria Commission of the League of Nations that, after a study tour in India in 1929, emphasized the importance to public health work of what I may describe as the element of the miraculous. "The population," they said, "is at present not sufficiently educated to appreciate prevention of disease, but is still in the 'dramatic' stage which likes to see cures." Mankind in the mass likes to believe in miraculous cures, and quacks thrive for this reason. We are a long way from the stage when science can do miracles with tuberculosis, yet if we want people to believe in and act on our measures for prevention, we must be in a position to show that we know enough about it to be able to produce impressive results by way of treatment. And this brings me to the question of your central clinic.

The problem has wide ramifications and involves attention to many allied subjects. Among them is the very big one of nutrition, not only with regard to quantity but also as regards quality. There is a lot that can be done towards making diets more nutritive and health-giving without necessarily being expensive. This is a remark that applies particularly to students and others who have to feed themselves on very limited funds and with very limited knowledge of what is really nutritious as well as palatable. I have been interested to hear that you have been making experiments in distributing nourishment to a limited number of patients. I feel sure that the supervision and observation which your staff of health visitors are able to contribute will greatly enhance its value. Similarly I have no doubt that



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co-operation between your visiting and research staff and any public organisation that can be induced to take up the problem of nutrition and propaganda regarding diet, will increase the results of propaganda and experiment to a great extent.

Her Excellency the Marchioness of Linlithgow drew attention to yet another aspect of the problem, namely that of the aftercare of patients—a subject in which Her Excellency herself is closely interested in England. It is early yet to see what definite plans may materialize in this regard. It may, however, be observed that Government itself has recently acquired new experience as regards settlements of a village type as a result of the establishment of their agricultural training centres. I would say that one lesson there learnt is, that such settlements may well be both healthy and congenial to people of the middle class, provided they secure suitable occupations, congenial company, and a degree of intellectual interest.



IV

ENGINEERING¹

ALTHOUGH it is less than a year since I last had the privilege and pleasure of dining with you as your guest, it is peculiarly true to say that much water has flowed under the bridges in those ten and a half months. In fact, those of you who have had responsibilities in connection with bridges—I am thinking at the moment more particularly of the Hardinge Bridge², but it is only one of many—will probably say that a great deal too much water has flowed, and I can well imagine your feelings as the never-ceasing flood bore down upon you and threatened destruction to your handiwork which, great as it is, is puny compared to the titanic forces which nature is fond of loosing occasionally to prevent us mortals from having too good a conceit of ourselves.

I can also well imagine that in moments of depression, possibly bordering on despair, at seeing vast volumes of surging water advancing as relentlessly as time or fate, you may have thought of and envied Noah who, when his constructional work was done, could

¹ Speech at the Annual Dinner of the Institute of Engineers (India), Calcutta, 10th January, 1935.

² The Hardinge Bridge over the River Padma, about 120 miles North of Calcutta, on the E. B. Ry., built under the direction of Mr. (now Sir Robert) Gales. Constructed 1909-1915 and opened by H. E. Lord Hardinge on the 4th March, 1915.

It is 5983 feet long, has foundations going down 160 feet below low water level, and cost about Rs. 3½ crores.



forget about it and spend his time doing a pleasure cruise in the most complete travelling menagerie of which history holds any record. I have no doubt, however, that Noah had his problems and worries and that Zoology, catering problems and marine engineering, to say nothing of a wife and several children, kept him busy and anxious, for, as I get older, I tend to think that one of the truest things that has ever been said is "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward"¹.

I do not speak anything but the truth when I tell you that I have always had a great admiration for engineers and their works. Your President referred to the outstanding examples of engineering skill that are to be seen in my native land. One of my earliest recollections is of walking across the Forth Bridge before it was opened to traffic, and I have lately seen the vast changes wrought over hundreds of square miles by the Grampian hydro-electric scheme which, incidentally, has involved the driving of a great tunnel through the heart of Scotland's biggest mountain. Here in Calcutta, I cannot help being constantly reminded of the fact that the house in which I live was built by an engineer—a massive structure covering a wide area and resting on almost the worst foundation imaginable, yet it stands a monument of solidity and strength unaffected either by constant changes in water levels or by recurring earthquake tremors.

I can scarcely think that any intelligent human being is not interested in what may rightly be called the wonders of engineering, and the Governor of Bengal has, perforce, to take a keen practical interest, in addition to an intellectual interest, in engineering matters for, in this Province they play no small part in the general administration. The many rivers of Bengal see to that, and

¹ Job V. 7.

provide us with problems—generally emergent—of bridging and river training, and when the solution of the latter proves abortive or impossible, our Road and Building Engineers have to come into action at the gallop to make new constructions to replace those that have been engulfed and washed away. Special words of praise have been bestowed on the great engineering achievements to be seen on every hand in Calcutta. These, I think, we might call the flowers of peace and prosperity—the outward and visible signs of the perfection of the art and science of civil engineering.

I join in that praise, but my thoughts fly at once to other feats performed out in the mofussil with nothing to show for them except the fact that a township still stands safe and sound, or that thousands of cultivators have harvested their crops in security. And I would like to pay a tribute to the sterling work done in emergencies by engineers in the districts, often under conditions of discomfort, danger and chaos after natural calamities, working desperately against time with improvised materials and labour and every kind of makeshift. The story with which we were all regaled in our youth of the boy hero who lay a whole night through with his arm thrust into the breach in an embankment which threatened to inundate the fields and homesteads of his people, pales into insignificance beside the actual achievements which are matters of everyday experience here.

Picture to yourselves a pitch black night with rain pouring down, a slippery embankment on the other side of which a flooded river is hurtling down, rising every hour and threatening to overtop it to start a breach which will rapidly open out to pour torrents of water over a whole countryside. Then imagine the task of the engineer on the spot with probably nothing but a labour



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force of undisciplined and unorganized local coolies. I think you will join with me in saying that admirable as are the magnificent engineering feats done at leisure and after the most careful thought and planning, and however much they may be a mirror of the culture of the age, yet, since it is courage that keeps a race virile and since without it culture leads inevitably to decadence, the tenacity of the engineers in the mofussil and the way they rise to the occasion are things of which the profession may be justly proud.



V

REORIENTATION¹

WHAT Bengal needs, perhaps more than anything else, is the return of her *bhadralok* from the towns to the villages. Government are about to publish, for criticism and opinion, a somewhat lengthy memorandum reviewing the position of education in Bengal and outlining a new policy. The underlying idea of the reorientation of policy which is suggested in the note is to intensify middle vernacular education, and bring a really effective primary education within the grasp of the masses. The curriculum is intended to be reorganized so as to give it a definitely rural and agricultural bias, encouraging boys to stay in their villages and turn their thoughts and ambitions towards improved methods of agriculture and standards of living. It would thus discourage boys who are judged unfit for it from seeking a higher education.

I see great possibilities for Bengal in an educational reform of this nature, but it is no exaggeration to say that the keystone of the arch of rural regeneration will be the provision by the Universities of highly intelligent educated men and women who shall be country-minded instead of town-minded. Love of the motherland is deep-seated and urgent in the Bengali race, and so insistent is it that it has taken for many the perverted form of

¹ Speech at the Convocation of the Dacca University, 18th July, 1935.



terrorism, and for many more the almost equally perverted form of anarchy in the shape of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. Both these forms of imagined service to the country are merely destructive and worse than negative. This fact is now realized by the immense majority of the patriotic sons and daughters of this Province. Thank God, the realisation has not come too late, and though great damage has been done it is not irreparable.

Students, do not be deluded into thinking, as so many young people are inclined to, that happiness is to be got by choosing a career which offers glittering prizes, whether they be of money or of rank and position. Do not for one moment believe that it is one whit the less honourable or satisfactory to live a life of usefulness and service to a small and perhaps, seemingly obscure part of the community. One of the truest things ever said was that it is more blessed to give than to receive. This is only true if the giving is done in the true spirit of a gift and without any thought of recompense. That is what true love is and what makes it such a tremendously potent force. If you are true lovers of your country, give to her with open hands.

Bengal needs your service and I can promise you this, that if you give her what she is calling for she will, without your asking or even wishing for it, repay you in untold measure in happiness, contentment and the love, honour and respect of those among whom you live. She needs village doctors, village school-masters, and cultivated men to give the lead to the simple villagers. They need instruction in sanitation, the methods of agriculture, the marketing of their produce and the establishment of small local industries to supply their wants. Bengal needs men of high intellect and education

to sit on the Union Boards and plan constructively for the improvement of the rural areas ; and on the Union Benches and Courts to see that the justice which is brought to the doors of the people is fair and enlightened. They have to train, inspire and lead village defence parties who will act according to plan should dacoits venture to attack a village. They should also take the lead in forming co-operative societies for a multitude of purposes which will band the people together in small units working for the mutual advantage of their members.

These are, in outline, but a few of the ways in which you can render the truest service to your country. And those of you who feel that your abilities and leanings are such that you can best serve your country by aiming at Government service or public life, or one of the professions which can only be practised in big cities, will do right to go ahead. Others may of course decide at once that their career is to be one of service in rural areas such as I have outlined. There will, however, be many, perhaps the majority, who will be in doubt as to whether to turn to the towns or whether to choose a life in which there will be no prospects other than a bare livelihood. Some of these may try a town career and fail. To these I would say "turn your thoughts definitely to the countryside and prepare yourselves for a life there."

I WANT to say something about one aspect of nation¹ building, namely, the welfare of the youth of the province. Youth is a problem that has been prominently before

¹ Speech at the St. Andrews' Day Dinner, Calcutta, 30th Nov., 1936.



us in recent years, and it is no source of pleasure to me or to any of my colleagues, that in so many respects our attentions to youth have of necessity been of a repressive type. We owe a duty to society as a whole, and if youth has gone wrong we cannot shirk that duty from motives of misplaced sentiment. I for one, so long as I retain any responsibility for the well-being and safety of the society of this province, will not shirk it. We have, however, made it clear that we are not impelled by motives of vindictiveness, and we have given practical demonstration of our anxiety to reclaim those who have been misled and are prepared to return to saner, and I hope, to happier lives. But this does not absolve us from our responsibility for those who have not been misled and for the generations of youth yet to come. I do not propose to enter into a controversy on the subject of education in general, but I believe there will be no controversy when I say that the health and happiness of the rising generation is a problem that must and will be tackled.

Here let me acknowledge the debt that we owe to one who is a firm believer in the younger generation, and who for many years has been deeply interested in what are known as Youth Movements—I refer to General Lindsay. Since he came to Bengal, he has lost no opportunity of studying the problems of our own youth at first hand, and placing his experience and his enthusiasm at our disposal. There is no civilized State in the world to-day that can afford to neglect the physical and recreational education of its young people. Germany has shown the world what can be done to remould a rising generation. Whether the policy there followed will ultimately lead to good or evil, we are not qualified to say; but nobody can deny its effectiveness or ignore its lessons. There are in Bengal numerous



organisations, concerned in some way or other with the welfare of the young. Their efforts are held back not merely by lack of finance, but just as much by lack of co-ordinated leadership and trained organizers. It must be our endeavour to provide not only the personnel to undertake adequate training of the young in healthy sports and recreation, but also to set up an all-embracing organisation in which the trained specialist can work hand in hand with those who in private life are genuinely anxious to devote some part of their energies to making the lives of the young fuller, happier and healthier.

We propose to set up a small body of men, both in the service of the Crown and in various walks of life, to study the problem with this ultimate aim firmly in view. They will consider by what stages that objective can be reached and which of those stages are eligible to be financed, provided those who will then be responsible for policy in Bengal should agree as to the urgency of having something done. For my part, if before the time comes for me to leave Bengal I can make any contribution towards starting this work for youth on sure foundations, I shall feel that I have made a parting gift of some value to the land we live in.

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